

EUROPEAN UNION



COMITTEE OF THE REGIONS



CoR-AER Action Plan 2008-2009

Having Regard to

- the decision of the Bureau of the Committee of the Regions on 14 May 2002 to increase cooperation between the Committee and the European associations representing local and regional authorities by establishing common structural activities (R/CdR 106/2002 item 11),
- the decision of the AER to develop an action plan with the Committee of the Regions,
- the good cooperation between the Committee of the Regions and the European associations representing local and regional authorities,

the Secretary General of the Committee of the Regions (CoR), **Mr Gerhard Stahl**

and

the Secretary General of the Assembly of European Regions (AER), **Mr Klaus Klipp**

agree to further enhance cooperation between the CoR and AER by establishing a common action plan for 2008-2009. A report on the implementation of this current plan will be presented to the CoR bureau and the Bureau of AER in late 2009.

The common action plan 2008-2009 contains the following priorities:

1) Involvement of AER's expertise in order to support the work of the CoR and its rapporteurs

Drawing on regional knowledge and experiences and making better use of regional expertise, the AER will contribute actively to the work carried out by the Committee of the Regions on specific topics in order to support the appointed rapporteurs or to organize the follow-up of specific projects. This contribution can take the form of written contributions, of participation in so called "task forces" with CoR rapporteurs, and the participation in CoR commission meetings and thematic working parties.

The participation of the AER in the Committee of the Regions' work in 2008-2009 should primarily focus on the following issues:

- Services of General Interest and other aspects of the Single Market
- Western Balkans
- EU budget review
- Territorial Cohesion
- Energy policy
- Active Citizenship of Young people
- Multilevel Governance

AER's involvement in the work of the CoR should be foreseen in the development of opinions to which its participation has a clear political added value for both parties.

2) Dialogue, communication and visibility

In 2008-2009 special efforts need to be undertaken to communicate the Lisbon Treaty to the citizens and to implement the new provisions (e.g. subsidiarity monitoring by regional parliaments) also at regional level.

With regard to the Structured Dialogue between the European Commission and the European and national associations of local and regional authorities, the CoR and AER will continue their successful cooperation.

The Committee of the Regions and AER will also cooperate closely with regard to the Territorial Dialogue. The Territorial Dialogue is organised each year by the Committee of the Regions in advance of the Spring Council, focusing on how local and regional governments can contribute to the development and implementation of all the various aspects of the Lisbon Strategy across all of the Member States. The AER will be given the possibility to participate in those meetings with high-level political representation.

3) Organisation of common conferences, seminars and events

Building on the experience of past successful cooperation, the secretariats of the CoR and AER will explore how to improve the coordination of their communication channels to increase the visibility and impact of their joint actions. Specifically, the CoR and AER should aim to maximise possibilities for mutual participation in conferences organised by each party. In this context regular meetings between the services dealing with press and communication will be organised.

The Committee of the Regions' *Open Days* in October 2008 and 2009 will also provide an opportunity for active involvement by AER members who wish to participate in the OPEN DAYS as organisers or participants. The CoR will participate in several "Citizens fora" organised by AER in the member states.

The AER will also invite Committee of the Regions' speakers to participate in key conferences and seminars.

4) Joint activities in the field of communication

The CoR and AER will explore the possibility of establishing common initiatives in the field of communication, such as advertising each others' publications. The mutual use of communication tools of both organisations should be enhanced (e.g. newsletters, websites, mutual presence with information stands at CoR and AER events, exchange of documents or reception of visitor groups).

With a view to bringing Europe closer to its citizens, the CoR and AER envisage to enhance their cooperation not only in Brussels, but also in the member states and in AER's member regions. For example, an exchange of experience and best practices on communicating Europe outside Brussels could strengthen the communication potential of both sides. This could for example take the form of organising common decentralised events during the OPEN DAYS or to associate the CoR to AER events in neighbouring countries of the European Union where AER is active.

5) Practical

Both the AER and the CoR are invited to attend each other's Bureau meetings. In the spirit of cooperation that this document embodies, the President of the Committee of Regions will be invited to address the AER General Assembly. Additionally, in order to ensure access to the activities of the Committee of the Regions, the AER will be entitled to three permanent passes annually to the Committee of the Regions.

Brussels, March 2008

Gerhard Stahl
Secretary General
Committee of the Regions

Klaus Klipp
Secretary General
Assembly of European Regions