

ŠTEFAN FÜLE

MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Mr Roy Perry
President of the Standing Committee on Institutional Affairs
Assembly of European Regions
Deputy leader of Hampshire

To be contacted via:

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Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter of 3 October 2011, providing me with the Assembly of European Regions' position paper on the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP).

I am pleased to confirm my agreement with recommendations contained in this document. Naturally, we will include your valuable suggestions in our ongoing work on the ENP, but already at this stage I can confirm that many of the Assembly's remarks are reflected in the documents and working papers dealing with the future of the European Neighborhood Policy.

In particular, let me assure you that we are fully supportive of maintaining the carefully balanced approach between the Eastern and Southern strands of the ENP, which, in line with your words, should be treated as "equally important, mutually enriching and synergetic", while paying attention to their specific territorial diversities. In this context we also do not forget about the specific status of the Black Sea and we are prepared to invest more funds and efforts in this region.

The postulates for decentralisation and strengthening of multilevel governance have already been well incorporated in our cooperation with the Partners. In the same spirit, our current work towards the new generation of Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC) programmes aims at a substantial simplification of their procedures, as well as ensuring better complementarity between all forms of territorial cooperation.

I find very useful your suggestions to strengthen our practical cooperation with the Congress of Local Authorities of the Council of Europe and I take note of your request of an increased involvement of regional authorities in the promotion of this policy.

Allow me in conclusion to express my gratitude for the positive work of the Assembly, and the hope for more direct cooperation between the European Commission and the Assembly of European Regions in the future.

With best regards,

