



ASSEMBLÉE DES RÉGIONS D'EUROPE  
ASSEMBLY OF EUROPEAN REGIONS  
VERSAMMLUNG DER REGIONEN EUROPAS  
ASAMBLEA DE LAS REGIONES DE EUROPA  
ASSEMBLEA DELLE REGIONI D'EUROPA

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**Press Release**

**The European Regions and the problem in Kosovo**

During the AER Bureau meeting in Brussels, the representatives of the Regions of over twenty European countries, strongly condemned the ethnic cleansing policy which is still in force in Kosovo and appealed for an imminent political or diplomatic solution to the conflict with the participation of the European Union.

*“Through the principles defined in the AER’s Declaration on Regionalism in Europe and the experience acquired by some of our Regions in the administration of territories with different ethnic groups, regionalism could contribute actively to the sustainable reconstruction of peace in the Balkans and establish stable democratic systems which respect cultural, social and economic diversity”* declared Luc Van den Brande, Minister-President of Flanders and President of the Assembly of European Regions.

In its resolution on the situation in Kosovo, the AER states that it will take an active part in the peace process which it supports wholeheartedly. The AER, whose goal over the past 15 years has been to establish a Europe which takes account of regional diversity, has already offered the Balkan Regions the possibility of joining the association as observers. With this in mind, the AER reminds those concerned that its European training programmes which aim at a better European integration at regional level - especially the Summer School and Centurio - are open to participants of all central and eastern European countries. The AER Bureau has asked the working group on Minorities to concentrate its activities on the Kosovo issue and has also proposed helping the regional authorities in the Balkans by sharing the experience acquired by its members Regions in this area. The AER resolution on Kosovo will be transmitted to the European institutions, the Council of Europe, the OSCE and the other interregional organisations in Europe.

Luc Van den Brande, President of the AER, thanked the member Regions who have already provided humanitarian help to the Kosovar refugees. However, in order to contribute efficiently to the situation, he invited AER members to make contact with the national representatives of international organisations such as the United Nations’ High Commission for Refugees, the Red Cross or with the non-governmental humanitarian organisations which are already working in the area in order to identify their needs or provide the most useful aid. The Regions are also requested to become involved in the partnership initiatives of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE) with a view to creating partnerships with local and regional authorities in the Balkan States.

*The AER is since 1985 the political movement of the Regions of Europe, which are committed to the promotion of regionalism in Europe and to the development of interregional cooperation.*

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