



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

Lyons, 3rd December 1999

Press release

AER General Assembly (Lyons, 2-3 December 1999)

For a Europe with its Regions

At its General Assembly in Lyons on 2nd and 3rd December 1999, the Assembly of European Regions (AER), which represents 300 European Regions from 26 countries, wishes to bring the European Council of Helsinki's (10-11 December) attention to:

- 1) The need, in the general interest of Europe, to acknowledge the role of the Regions in the unification process, in particular regarding the full application of the principle of subsidiarity;
- 2) The need for a correct legal and political definition of this principle in the Treaty, in order to allow the Regions of the enlarged Europe to jointly participate in the construction of Europe by building on their great diversity.

As the new treaty which will result from the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) will be the first in a series of successive treaties which will have a serious influence on the life of our peoples, regional authorities wish to be informed and have a direct impact in the elaboration of these important international instruments. The Regions of Europe feel that the IGC Agenda is too limited and too focused on procedures, therefore not allowing for the preparation of the new European Society. A vision combining a general perspective with respect for the diversities to be found in the Regions is necessary so that the reforms currently underway on the continent and, in particular, Union enlargement, keep and develop their social, economic and territorial cohesion.

In the various negotiations in which the Union participates, on a world wide scale, in particular those of the WTO, we express our wish for Europe to adopt a strong, but flexible position taking into consideration the preparation for globalisation without compromising the diversity of peoples and cultures which form the foundation of the political and social organisation model of Europe.

Ever faithful to its declaration on regionalism in Europe, the AER calls for an adaptation of the European institutions without compromising the construction of an Europe with its Regions and wishes to actively participate in this debate along with other interregional organisations, cosignatories of this declaration (CEMR, CPMR, AEBR, RETI).

In the perspective of a new dimension in the enlarged Europe, the Regions of Europe aim to involve young europeans to a greater extent in public affairs. Aware of the hopes, expectations and aspirations, but also of the growing tendency in young people to doubt the capabilities of elected members, and the political system in general, to fight against unemployment and meet the challenges of the world economy, the regions wish to create the appropriate structures, such as "youth groups" in order to participate actively in public life and to make their opinions heard in the drawing up of youth policies. The AER will create a body which will be uniquely responsible for young people within its midst.

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The AER General Assembly has also adopted several resolutions drawn up by the thematic Committees and destined for the respective European Institutions, in particular:

- A resolution on EU territorial planning as well as the Common Agricultural Policy, especially in view of enlargement, which brings the EU's attention to the need to take into account the diversity of territories and their economic development, in particular, in rural, agricultural and peripheral areas, and the Region's responsibility in these two areas.
- A resolution on regional communications which underlines the interdependency between regional politics and transport and, in consequence, brings the EU's attention to the importance of the participation of regional authorities in the formulation of European policies on transport; this resolution also calls for the setting up of European co-financing for the development of public and other forms of transport, in particular for connecting rural and peripheral zones in the EU, but also for improving connections with candidate countries for future EU membership.
- A resolution on the Charter of fundamental rights in the EU, the preparation for which has been launched by the Council for General Affairs of the EU, which requests that all EU partners be consulted, regional authorities included, in the elaboration of this charter.

At the General Assembly, the AER also elected Mrs Liese Prokop (58 years old), Vice-Minister President of Lower Austria (A) and President of the Culture, Education and Training, Youth, Media and Sport Committee of the AER since 1996, as First Vice-President and Hans de Belder (61 years old), Flemish (B), former senator and diplomat, First Director General of the Flemish Office for External Trade, as Secretary General.

The AER is the political movement of the Regions of Europe which is engaged, since 1985, in favour of the promotion of regionalism in Europe and the development of interregional cooperation.

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