



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

Strasbourg, 20<sup>th</sup> November 2000

*Press Release*

**15<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the Regions of Europe**  
7 – 8<sup>th</sup> December 2000 – Seinäjoki – Etelä-Pohjanmaa (FIN)

At the invitation of Mr Kyösti Virrankoski, President of the Regional Council of South Ostrobothnia, the representatives of around 270 Regions from 26 countries, members of the Assembly of European Regions (AER), will meet on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> December 2000 in Seinäjoki, Finland, for their General Assembly.

The AER will take this occasion to open a debate on the new forms of governance in Europe. The "post-Nice" will also play an important role along with members Regions' contribution to the White paper of the European Commission which is currently being prepared. Discussions will mainly deal with the role of the Committee of the Regions in the European Union, the Regions' participation in the implementation of European policies with an impact at regional level, the direct participation of citizens in European affairs and the process of decentralisation which is currently underway in EU member States.

This years' General Assembly will be marked by the sign of change in the AER. Members will elect their new President, Vice-Presidents, Committee Presidents as well as the 46 members of the executive Bureau and their alternates, for a two year mandate. One new item is on the agenda: in order to respect the balance between the Regions of Western Europe and the Regions of Eastern and Central Europe – which represent over 40% of AER members – a second Vice-President should be elected for the first time this year.

Also on the agenda: this 15<sup>th</sup> General Assembly is the first to take place in a Scandinavian country. Five years after the entry of Finland in the European Union and the creation of real regional bodies in this country, this is the occasion to present the level of regional administration in the Region of the Baltic Sea to participants. This led to the idea of a seminar preceding the General Assembly, where the issues of the information society and the possibilities offered by information technologies in order to improve and develop democracy and cooperation in Europe would be discussed.

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

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