



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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"Yes, to the concept of a European Federation, but..."

On behalf of the Assembly of European Regions Mr Luc Van den Brande, its President, was delighted with the depth and the quality of the debate launched at European level by the speech of Joschka Fischer, German Minister of Foreign Affairs asking for the creation of a European Federation with a constitution, a government, a two chamber Parliament and a President elected through universal suffrage.

"The project of Mr Fischer has the merit of relaunching the debate on the long term vision and governance of an enlarged Europe which the too limited agenda of the next Intergovernmental Conference, regrettably, does not leave room for; however, these proposals seem to cover, voluntarily or non voluntarily, the regional level despite the interesting proposals put forward by his political party on this issue" – said the AER President.

Although, according to Mr Fischer, globalisation and europeisation are rejected due to their complicated nature and imply a need for security for the citizen *"Either the Region or the State will offer them this"* stated Mr Van den Brande. *"Indeed, the Region is one of the nearest political bodies to the citizen and, through interregional cooperation, actively participates in bringing European people closer to each other. The Europe of citizens, of which Mr Fischer sincerely wishes to see the construction, already exists and can be clearly seen in the profusion of concrete projects, twinings and interregional networks. Their contribution is particularly useful for the process of accession and allows the abstract character of European negotiations to be counterbalanced through concrete action."*

Although the project for the creation of a European Federation aims to directly combat the democratic deficit of the European institutions and to construct a more 'human' Europe, the political role of the Regions must be guaranteed and respected. The Regions must be better represented in present and future European institutions both at executive level and within the Parliament, in view of directly participating in European governance.

Although, according to Mr Fischer, it is important for the new governance in Europe to have a two chamber Parliament, *"I can but support this issue"* stated Mr Van den Brande *"on the condition that the representatives of the Regions of Europe can be represented within one of them, which is not the case today."*

Indeed, since its creation, the AER has promoted the idea of a real Chamber of the Regions at European level. At its meeting on 5th May 2000 in Stuttgart, its political Bureau, which debated the subject of governance at European level, spoke in favour of the creation of this chamber and of a clarification, in the new Union Treaty, of the distribution of competences between European, national, regional and local levels on the basis of the principle of subsidiarity.

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

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