



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

**Assembly of European Regions demands
"EU Presidency Programme,
what about the regions and their citizens Mr Aznar?"**

After having assessed the programme for the Spanish EU Presidency, Liese Prokop, President of the Assembly of European Regions (AER), and Mr Brian Greenslade, President of the AER Regional Policy Committee, announced their astonishment with the lack of regional policy on the list of priorities on the "More Europe" programme drawn up by the new EU Presidency.

"The future of European regional policy and common agricultural policy are two poles of strength behind the implementation of new governance in an enlarged Europe. These policies will also play a substantial role in accession negotiations beginning under the Spanish Presidency. Our member Regions within the EU and those in applicant countries work as partners on an equal basis, within my AER Committee. We deal on the future of regional policy and these Regions question the evasive attitude taken by the Spanish Presidency. This hesitation is confirmed by the fact that the Spanish Agricultural Minister recently announced a 5 year transition period for the payment of funding to farmers in new member States. The lengthening of transition periods will not solve the real problems created by enlargement" said Brian Greenslade.

"Spain is one of the main beneficiaries of EU structural funds. Its Regions enjoy wide ranging powers of autonomous government. This is surprising that Prime Minister Aznar has made no reference to regional policy in the EU-Spanish Presidency programme. The Spanish regions have been able to rapidly develop thanks to funding received from the EU. They will once again benefit from the European market and common development in an enlarged European Union" Liese Prokop stressed today.

"Over and above financial considerations, enlargement must be built on solidarity in the EU. Solidarity is one of the main values of our Assembly which brings together 250 member Regions from the East and the West. It's the only way to avoid a double track enlarged Europe leading to the failure of EU enlargement" she added.

Liese Prokop is Vice-Minister President of Niederösterreich (Austria).
Brian Greenslade is Leader of the County of Devon (UK).

Created in 1985, the AER is a political organisation of the Regions in Europe and the speaker for their interests at European and international level. Its mission: to bring together the Regions of Europe and to allow them to be, together, actors in the construction of Europe and European integration. The AER currently has 250 member Regions from 25 countries as well as 12 interregional organisations.

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