



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

Press release

European Constitution: regions express some reservations on the first draft

Strasbourg, 21st February 2003

At its meeting on 21st February in Strasbourg, the AER Presidium made some reservations on the sixteen draft articles of the European Constitution, although a global vision of the text is not yet available. "*The common roots of the European diversity constitutes one of the Union values. Therefore, the cultural diversity should appear among the founding values of the UE drawn up under Art. 2 of the draft Constitution*" said Liese Prokop, President of the AER.

The AER, which leads a campaign in favour of the preservation of the cultural diversity in Europe, is particularly against the integration of the services of general interest in the field of Culture and Education in the GATS negotiations. The AER will be very vigilant on the reformulation of the Art. 133, 149 et 151 that constitute at present a guarantee of the prerogatives of the member states in these fields.

Furthermore, the AER members have unanimously judged problematic, and even dangerous, the concept of "*national identity*" (Art.1-2). Adrien Zeller, Vice-President of the AER, has proposed to replace it with "*national specificities*" which better expresses the diversity recovered by the identity of a country.

Peter Straub, President of the Institutional Committee of the AER, asked to have further discussion on the question of the competences and their repartition (Art. 10 & 11), notably during the next plenary session on 27th – 28th February. "*The distribution of competences as formulated in the draft Treaty is not in favour of the application of the principle of subsidiarity*", said Mr Straub. He nevertheless underlined the existing consensus between the members of the Convention on the necessity to root the future Constitution in the regions. He finally announced a conference "The Regions within the European Constitution" jointly organised by the AER and the Bertelsmann Foundation to follow up the dialogue with the members of the Convention and to make them know the proposals of the European regions (Brussels, 11th April).

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