



## *Press Release*

### **Anchoring regions in the European Constitution**

Strasbourg, 4 July 2003

The Presidium of the Assembly of European Regions (AER), meeting in Strasbourg today, evaluated the work of the European Convention and expressed satisfaction on its initial results.

In effect, Part I of the Constitution regarding the Definition and Objectives of the Union took into consideration a large number of the amendments formulated by the AER intended to anchor the Regions in this new Treaty and to reinforce their role in the new European architecture.

The AER commends in particular the limitation of EU competencies, the best formulation of the subsidiarity principle yet extended to regions, the recognition of the role of regional and local authorities, and most importantly the preservation of cultural diversity in Europe guaranteed by the draft constitution.

However, two of AER's provisions were not incorporated in the Constitution presented to the European Council in Thessaloniki:

- One relating to the possibility of Regions to bring cases before the European Court of Justice when the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality have been transgressed;
- Another relating to the principle of "loyal cooperation" which must equally include the Regions.

*"Much progress has been obtained to reinforce the role Regions in Europe. However, we must continue to pursue our influential work with the members of the European Parliament and of the national Governments to ensure that Regions are integrated as full partners into the Union under the final version of the Treaty to be agreed at the next Intergovernmental Conference"* said Liese Prokop, President of AER. Prokop added, *"our work with the Convention must be pursued as well. Our actions continue with Part III of the Constitution regarding the politics and functioning of the Union, which is currently under debate and concerns all European Regions. AER must be particularly vigilant regarding its final draft"*.

The AER Presidium adopted in this judgment a series of amendments on matters concerning public health policies, social policies, economic and social cohesion, culture, and education formulated by Committee guidelines. These propositions will be addressed to the Presidium and to members of the Convention. They will also be promoted by AER with respect to the Intergovernmental Conference (please see attached document).

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