



Press Release

Big build-up, fizzle finish? Regions pledge to save the hopes of Copenhagen

In spite of the failure of the Copenhagen Summit to deliver a long term agreement, the Assembly of European Regions and its member regions pledge to pursue their efforts in the struggle against climate change

Strasbourg (F), 21 December 2009.

“Although we expected this result, we are very disappointed about the outcome of the Copenhagen Conference. Heads of State have really missed on a unique opportunity to fight global warming. Unfortunately, they tried to protect their own advantages, and made only cautious offers”. This is the first reaction of **Michèle SABBAN**, President of the Assembly of European Regions (AER), when the failure of Copenhagen climate change conference was confirmed.

The Copenhagen agreement between the 193 Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is indeed a minima-agreement: it is not binding, and it does not establish a deadline for a new treaty, while the Kyoto protocol will expire in 2012. The only two progresses are the recognition of a 2 degrees Celsius limit to the rise of the global temperature, as well as a solidarity effort towards developing countries through a 30 billion financial aid until 2012, and 100 billion per year in the following years.

“I want to stress that the failure of the States to find an ambitious agreement for the planet will not influence our determination in finding innovative solutions, in setting up our own criteria and deadlines for increasing the furniture and use of renewable energies in our territories. For us, Copenhagen was a success indeed, and what is really happening on the international scene is the constitution of a true diplomacy of the regions” Ms Sabban added. « **The launch of the R20**, which aims to organise this emerging diplomacy of the territories, represents a major event for international life, and will have a major impact policy-making at the international level. AER obviously supports this initiative, and will help by sharing its experience in the field of interregional cooperation. ”

AER President concludes: *“One of Copenhagen’s issues found here its solution: several actors are already starting working, in spite of the setting or not of an ambitious agreement. They are already producing the necessary changes. We will certainly not wait for next conference in December in Mexico to act!”* Thanks to the creation of its **“Action tank”** in 2010, AER will unite all key actors, regions, federal states and economic stakeholders to deliver concrete actions to territories. A calendar for 2010 activities is under preparation.

Reminder of AER's activities in the field of energy:

First European Regions Energy Day, Brussels, 29 April 2010:

AER and GE Energy establish a yearly cooperation meeting between regional decision makers and European energy experts. This day aims to propose regional responses to current energy challenges and to prepare the future of regional energy for generations to come. Economic efficiency, security of supply and respect for the environment are the major challenges that face the regions.

Peer Reviews: following this method initiated by the AER, representatives from member regions go to their counterparts and explore with them the best adapted solutions for them to establish adaption and mitigation measures to tackle climate change.

Interreg IVC **MORE4NRG** project brings AER together with 11 partner regions to develop sustainable energy strategies through exchange of experiences. This initiative shows that regions play a key role in the development of policies and regulations; regions can also provide national authorities with information on what is happening on the ground and assess energy demand at local level.

Survey on energy policies led by AER at the end of 2009 among its member regions*. The answers showed that 78% of the member regions (currently 270) have already implemented a climate policy in their territories. The final conclusions of this study will be presented during the European Regions Energy Day.

**66 regions from 24 countries already answered*

AER-Fedarene Declaration (European Federation of Regional Energy and Environment Agencies): since 2006, 96 European regions signed this declaration, which is a strategic tool translating broad energy objectives into more specific ones and a commitment of regions on measurable targets.

*The **Assembly of European Regions (AER)** is the largest independent network of regions in wider Europe. Bringing together more than 270 regions from 33 countries and 16 interregional organisations, AER is the political voice of its members and a forum for interregional co-operation.*

AER Contact:

Francine Huhardeaux, Press and Communications Officer, f.huhardeaux@aer.eu - Tel./ Fax : +33 3 88 22 74 49

