



Press Release

European regions call for subsidiarity and multi-level governance to be more than words

Entering into force today and referring to the principle of subsidiarity more than 30 times, the Lisbon Treaty can pave the way for stronger regions and a stronger Europe

Strasbourg (F), 1 December 2009

As the Lisbon Treaty enters into force, the Assembly of European Regions (AER) has called for a genuine EU multilevel governance system, in order “to ensure the sustainable development of the Union and enhance its legitimacy.”

In a [position paper](#) adopted at its General Assembly in Belfort (F) last week and submitted to the European Commission yesterday, Europe’s largest organisation of regions stresses that the “right political framework, political culture and capacities” must be fulfilled if the European Union is to take the idea of multi-level governance from an amorphous concept to a genuine system of governance.

In a letter sent yesterday to European Commission president **José Manuel Barroso**, AER president **Michèle Sabban** noted that, “*the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty will bring substantial progress towards a more efficient and democratic governance in the European Union. Beyond the legal texts, however, it is the whole political culture which needs to evolve.*”

Ms Sabban’s letter went on to ask the Commission “*to ensure the sincere application of the sub-national subsidiarity and partnership principles throughout the whole decision-making process, including the pre-decision phases, by better structuring the consultation process*”.

To that end, AER’s position paper proposes the creation of an observatory of multilevel governance, gathering the major interregional associations and the Committee of the Regions (CoR), to monitor the implementation of the Charter on multilevel governance proposed by the CoR. The paper further calls for the creation of an ad hoc committee at the CoR, gathering partner organisations such as AER, which could “activate their networks to ensure that infringements in the principle of subsidiarity are reported”.

The debate on multilevel governance, AER’s position concludes, “should be run in synergy with key debates on, in particular, the new EU regional strategies (macro-regions), the EU budget review, the future EU regional policy and the expected White Paper on territorial cohesion.”

Notes:

AER has been promoting the principles of subsidiarity and multi-level governance for many years with the AER [Communication Awards](#), [Citizens Forums](#) and [Training Academies](#), along with the worldwide “[Subsidiarity is a Word](#)” movement.

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*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.*

