



Press Release

**Cohesion Policy and Europe 2020
The AER challenges EU decisions to affect Europe for the next 10 years**

Alba (RO), 16 March 2010.

110 representatives from 39 regions across 15 countries met for the plenary session of the Committee 'Economy and Regional Development' of the Assembly of European Regions (AER), which took place in the Alba County (Romania). Together, they reviewed the AER's strategy in relation to cohesion policy and agreed on what European regions should expect from the new Europe 2020 strategy.

AER is constantly looking for ways to improve the daily life of all European citizens, especially in relation to work. Therefore, AER and the Brussels-Capital Region (B) will hold a high level conference on 7 December in Brussels: 'Cohesion in Europe: Regions take up the challenge. Towards a visionary and innovative regional policy for all Europeans'. In order to maximise the content and the impact of the conference, AER will organise three workshops in April, June and September, which will allow the experts and civil servants to work on core technical issues in order to prepare the political debate in December.

About the Europe 2020 Strategy: AER is determined to avoid the mistakes of the Lisbon Strategy. *"We call upon European policymakers to finally focus on a bottom-up approach and establish a multi-level governance. Remember that the future strategy will be implemented over the next 10 years! Only then will the EU finally reconnect with its citizens"* underlined **Håkan Sandgren**, President of AER Committee for 'Economy and Regional development', and County Councillor of Jönköping (S). Participants also stressed that cohesion policy is certainly an instrument but it must never be subordinated to Europe 2020. They finally highlighted that agriculture and rural development were not included in the text in its current version, which is an issue.

AER, as always, will now approach the European and national policymakers to inform them of the demands of its members and provide them with field experience.

*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.*

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