



editorial

The Finnish presidency of the EU, which began during a time of a changing European environment (new Commission, newly elected parliament, adopted Agenda 2000), will have several important issues to deal with. These include the acceleration of the enlargement process and a reflection on EU objectives for the XXIst century. A "Millenium Declaration" is already being prepared. This declaration will be used as the main political document on the eve of the next Intergovernmental Conference in 2000, which will, itself, conclude with a new Treaty.

The AER must, therefore, over the next few months, concentrate its activities on these European priorities. It must offer a constructive contribution to the definition of what the EU should be and do during the next millenium, whilst respecting the principles set out in its "Declaration on Regionalism in Europe".

On the other hand, it must also pursue its activities with a view to having the European Charter for Regional Self-government quickly adopted as a convention of good practice by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and participate actively in the revision of the CLRAE's statutes.

These major institutional priorities should not, however, deter us from the work carried out through our four Committees on the main regional, social and cultural policies.

There is still a lot to do and, after some relaxing holidays, we wish all our AER members a fruitful new political season.

Hans De Belder

AER Summer School

>An event not to be missed

The 4th edition of the AER Summer School will take place this year in Porec (Istra-HR) from 29th August to 3rd September. A major part of its programme will concentrate on the role of the regions in the European Union enlargement process and on maintaining peace in Europe.

The AER Summer School is a forum for exchanges of experience in the area of regional development in Europe and is a unique interregional event. It allows political representatives, regional experts, universities and other interested participants to examine the decision-making and management processes of the regional level, to discuss the determining factors of regional development and to discover exemplary interregional, regional and cross-border cooperation projects.

The Region of Istra has organised the 1999 edition with the support of the Regions of Essex (GB), Krakow (PL), Noord-Brabant (NL), Pest (H), Stockholm (S), Thüringen (D), Vilnius (LT) and Vlaanderen (B). The AER Summer School also aims at providing information on the increased perception of the regions in the European Union enlargement and European peacekeeping processes.

Here are some of the important elements of the programme:

- **Interregional cooperation (29th August)**
 - Strengthening European integration through cross-border cooperation,
 - Developing east-west cooperation in view of EU enlargement.
- **The role of the regions in the EU accession process (30th August)**
 - The enlargement process from a central and eastern European point of view (discussions with the political representatives and experts from eastern countries),
 - Training needs for local and regional authorities (presentation of specific examples).

- **European regional policies (31st August, morning)**

- EU enlargement and economic and social cohesion: policies and programmes (notably INTERREG III) set up with the participation of the Commission's DG XVI and DG IA,
- Specific seminars dedicated to the PHARE and TACIS programmes,
- Working groups on project development.

- **Role of the regions in peacekeeping in Europe (31st August, afternoon)**

Round table with the participation of representatives of the Council of Europe and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

- **Culture and tourism, key elements of regional development (1st September)**

Example from Veneto supported by a visit to Venice.

- **Social inclusion (2nd September)**

- Presentation of the work carried out in this area by AER's Committee B,
- Role of regional partnerships,
- Needs for reinforced cooperation with the European Parliament,
- Participation in European programmes (the last two points, drawn up by representatives of the two European institutions concerned),
- Equal opportunities for men and women,
- Minority issues.

Each year over a hundred people from Europe and across the Atlantic take part in the AER Summer School. The previous editions took place in Budapest (1996), Krakow (1997) and Weimar (1998) and the 2000 edition is planned to take place in Vilnius (LT). You are therefore cordially invited to Istra in August for the event of the summer.

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> *The 6th Plenary Session of the CLRAE*

During the AER's preparatory meeting of 14th June 1999, the AER members who also have seats in the Chamber of Regions, examined the main themes of this session:

- progress and perspectives of regionalisation in Europe,
- revision of the CLRAE Statutory Charter,
- participation of women in politics,
- role of the regional authorities for maintaining stability and peace in Europe.

Several amendments and written questions were prepared and, subsequently, presented during the session. These aimed, in particular, at reinforcing the position of the Chamber of Regions and its consultation by the Council of Europe's statutory bodies in areas which concern the regions.

AER representatives also intervened during the session: C. Palmcrantz (Dalarna), on the participation of women and H. De Belder (Vlaanderen), on the role of interregional cooperation in the prevention of conflict.

After these contributions, the CLRAE decided to include the AER in two initiatives: the campaign by the Congress to encourage the participation of women in politics and partnerships between regional authorities for the promotion of democracy and sustainable development in Kosovo and throughout the Balkans.

AER Contact: Laura de Rose

Bureau meeting

> *Kosovo and Cologne at the heart of debates*

The new Bureau (elected by the last General Assembly) held its first meeting in Brussels on 12th May 1999.

Obviously, one of the main subjects of debate was the terrible situation in Kosovo. Beyond the humanitarian aid which many regions had provided since the beginning of the conflict, the Bureau members reflected on the role that the AER could play to encourage sustainable peace on this part of our continent. Supported by the principles set out in the "Declaration on regionalism in Europe" and, more generally, by those of a pluralist democracy, the state of law, and the protection of minorities, the Bureau stressed that the AER was an appropriate forum to resume dialogue between the parties in conflict and to avoid this type of crisis being reproduced in another region of the continent. A resolution was adopted in this respect and sent to the main European institutions.

The Bureau then went on to discuss the message to be transmitted to the European Council of Cologne (4th June 1999). President Van den Brande felt that the regions' opinions could be taken into account in the preparations for the new Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) by using the Committee of the Regions (CoR) as an intermediary. This implies, in particular, that the CoR could benefit, during the negotiations, from the specific consultation procedure set up for the European Parliament. For the regions, the IGC should also offer the occasion for the principle of subsidiarity to be specified and implemented and to make the Committee of the Regions a fully-fledged institution.

The Bureau heard the speeches of two external experts: C. De Noos, President of the European Group of the Caisses d'épargne, on their financial contributions to regional development in Europe and J. Palmer, Director of the European Policy Centre in Brussels on the evolution perspectives of the European Union.

The Bureau took note of the activities of the four permanent Committees and agreed to a working group being set up on "Equal opportunities between men and women" following an initiative by C. Palmcrantz (Dalarna). The main task of this group, as defined during the Turin conference, will be to follow the evolution of the representation of women within the different political bodies of the AER's member regions.

The Bureau was also given a progress report on the implementation of the strategy "Agenda 2000 for the regions of Europe" and took note of a report that was presented on this subject by H. De Belder. Different events have been planned - the Summer School, a seminar on regionalism, a conference on enlargement, a regional caravan in Hungary - within the framework of the objectives fixed by the General Assembly in Linz.

The Bureau took note of the AER's improved financial situation and of the initiatives undertaken on the Pacte situation. The Bureau finalised the job description for the post of AER Secretary General and launched the recruitment procedure by inviting members to ensure as large a publicity as possible.

AER Contact:
Eric Milesi



AER Activities: May-June 1999

Meetings

Bureau (Brussels, 12th May)
- Diffusion of the resolution on Kosovo and the declaration on the new IGC
- Follow-up to decisions made

Committees and Working Groups
- Committee A (Stuttgart, 27th May)
- Committee B (Trondheim, 6th-7th May)
- Strategy Group (Salzburg, 8th-9th June)
- Launch of the group "Equal opportunities for men and women": letter and registration

form sent to all member regions (to be returned before 16th August)

Recruitment of the AER Secretary General

- Information distributed to the regions and interregional organisation members
- Distribution to members of the job description and an advertisement to optimise the recruitment procedure

Conference "Regions and EU enlargement"

- Technical organisation of the

conference, in liaison with the region of Dolny Slask
- Mailing of invitations to regions and interregional organisation members as well as non-member regional authorities from the candidate countries (registration forms to be returned before 1st October)

Preparations for a draft budget 2000

- Letter sent by C. Ruey, Vice-President Treasurer to the Committee Presidents and those responsible for special

assignments to obtain their budgetary requirements (replies requested before 13th August)

Participation at other events

- Seminar "Strong Regions for a Strong Europe" with the CLRAE and Baden-Württemberg (Stuttgart, 27th-28th May)
- 6th plenary session of the CLRAE (Strasbourg, 15th-17th June): AER preparatory meeting (14th June)



> Centurio 1999

The 1999 Centurio training programme (exchanges of experience between the regions of western, central and eastern Europe) offers three types of traineeship:

- classic traineeships organised by the western regional administrations for regional political representatives and/or administrators from central and eastern Europe;
- traineeships organised in the regions of central and eastern Europe for political representatives and/or administrators from western European regions;
- twinned traineeships which are mutual exchanges (simultaneous or consecutive) between political representatives and/or administrators from western, central and eastern Europe.

The last two types of traineeship aim at reinforcing contacts which are already established and to encourage the implementation of partnerships or joint projects.

Twenty-one member regions have put themselves forward to receive the twenty-four trainees (classic traineeships) mainly from Poland, Romania and Hungary but also from Lithuania, Russia, Moldavia and Croatia. Six regions will be running twinned traineeships and six others will host eastern traineeships. The placements last four weeks, beginning from July. The final evaluation session will take place in November.

AER Contact:

Laura de Rose and Stéphanie Evans

> Committee A "Institutional Affairs" in Stuttgart

The Committee meeting, which was attended by nearly 40 European regions, was held on 6th May 1999 in Stuttgart, on the eve of the conference "Strong Regions for a Strong Europe", organised by the region of Baden-Württemberg in cooperation with the AER and the CLRAE.

Subjects discussed include:

- the contribution of the regions in the next Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) and a debate on subsidiarity,
- a draft European Constitution,
- the role of the AER and its "Declaration on regionalism in Europe" in the current debate with a view to adopting the CLRAE's European Charter for Regional Self-government.

With reference to the IGC, the

Committee has fixed two objectives: that the Committee of the Regions (CoR) obtain the status of a fully-fledged institution and that the cultural aspects in the different areas of competence within the European Union be taken into account, including the respect of linguistic diversity.

The Committee took note of the position adopted by the Bureau in May on subsidiarity and entrusted its political representatives with informing the European institutions and the national authorities.

With reference to the European Constitution, the Committee examined a document drafted by its President, W. Stächele, and decided to propose

<http://www.inforegio.org/>

The new regulations for the structural funds, which were published in the OJEC on 26th June, are available on the DGX VI Web site. You will also find the Vademecum document on the preparations of the CSF and the SPD. Finally, you can consult the European Spatial Development Perspective as it was adopted by the informal Council of Ministers responsible for Spatial Planning in May 1999 in Potsdam.

<http://europa.eu.int/infonet>

The European Commission Web site on social policy in Europe could be of particular interest to members of the AER's Committee B. Apart from European social news and an index on "Solidarities of Europe", there is also a discussion forum and a meeting venue for ideas and opinions. To participate, send your contribution to trunsoaf@dg10.cec.be

that the next AER General Assembly take a stand in this area.

The Committee confirmed its support of the CLRAE's activities on the adoption of the draft European Charter for Regional Self-government. This issue was presented by the working group on regions with legislative power. The Committee invited its members to reinforce their action within their governments and the Council of Europe, with a view to promoting a quick adoption of the draft by the Committee of Ministers.

The Committee A "Interregional cooperation" meeting will take place in Istra on 27th August 1999.

AER Contact:

Laura de Rose and Stéphanie Evans



notebook

Election results

Regional elections have been held recently throughout Europe. Here are some of the main results:

Germany

Roland Koch (CDU) was elected Minister-President of the Land of Hessen, Henning Scherf (SPD) was re-elected President of the Senate and Mayor of Bremen.

Austria

Jörg Haider (FPÖ) was elected President of the Land of Kärnten, Franz Schausberger (ÖVP) was re-elected President of the Land of Salzburg, Wendelin Weingartner (ÖVP) was re-elected President of the Land of Tirol.

France

Jean Baggioni (RPR) was re-elected President of the Executive Council of the Corse Region.

The Netherlands

The elections, which took place throughout the Dutch Provinces, have not created a major change in the representation of the political parties at regional level (increase in Christian Democrats and Socialists and a drop in Liberals).

United Kingdom

First elections in Scotland and Wales. Designation of Mr Donald Dewar (Labour Party) as Scottish First Minister, David Ellis Thomas (Plaid Cymru), member of the AER Scientific

Committee, becomes the Presiding Officer for the Welsh Assembly and Alun Michael (Labour Party) is First Secretary. Increase in Conservative representation in the local authorities in England.

NB. Results of the regional elections in Belgium and Spain will be given in the next issue.

European Cup of Regional Flavours

Limburg (NL) was elected to organise the 3rd edition of the European Cup of Regional Flavours. Gourmets from all over Europe will meet again in the year 2000 to discover or re-discover traditional, regional recipes.

Events

> Conference "Regions & Enlargement"

- Wroclaw, 21st October 1999 -

This conference, which is part of the AER's policy for the European Union enlargement process, is directed specifically at the regions from central and eastern European candidate countries with the aim of involving them more in this process.

Following the invitation of Dolny Slask, this conference will be held on 21st October 1999 in the Wroclaw Polytechnic (PL). Through open dialogue with representatives of the European institutions and exchanges of experience with the EU member regions, the regional authorities concerned can follow the progress of negotiations, evaluate their preparation regarding Community *acquis* and identify ways to reinforce their contribution to this process.

The conference will include three main sessions, supported by concrete examples:

I. "Regions and EU enlargement"

- Introduction by L. Van den Brande, AER President and M. Dammeyer, President of the Committee of the Regions
- View points from other interregional organisations with the participation of V. Giscard d'Estaing, President of the CEMR, V. Chiti, President of the CPMR and J. Vallvé, President of the AEBR
- Progress report on accession negotiations for candidate countries, N. Van der Pas, Director of the EU Task Force
- Contributions by W. Stächele and I. Jakovcic, Presidents of Committee A, followed by a debate

II. "The progress of regionalism in the candidate countries"

- Opening speech by J. Waszkiewicz, Marszałek of Dolny Slask
- Contribution by R. Locatelli, Head of the Secretariat of the CLRAE (Council of Europe), followed by a debate

III. "Regional policy and east-west interregional cooperation in the perspective of EU enlargement"

- Introduction concerning regional policy by E. Landaburu, Director General of the DG XVI of the European Commission and representative of AER's Committee C
- Introduction on interregional cooperation by C. Day, Director of the DG IB/Relations with central European countries and O. Kretschmer, First Vice-President of the AER
- Speeches by the Presidents of AEBR, CEMR, CPMR and the Presidents of the AER Committees, followed by a debate

AER Contact: General Secretariat

General Assembly

Following the invitation received by Anne-Marie Comparini, President of the Rhône-Alpes region (F), the next AER General Assembly will take place on 2nd and 3rd December in Lyon. The programme will be approved by the next Bureau and will be sent to members at the beginning of November. The AER would like to thank Rhône-Alpes, one of its founder regions, for its kind invitation.

AER Contact: Eric Milesi

Election of the Secretary General

During the General Assembly, the AER will elect its Secretary General for the period 2000-2004. The recruitment procedure has just been launched

(publication of the post in the "European Voice", distribution among members). The job description and application form can be obtained through the AER General Secretariat. Applications must be received before 15th August 1999.

AER Contact: Eric Milesi

Innovative Regions

Hagbarth Publications has just launched a new project for a publication entitled "Structural changes in Europe - Innovative Cities & Regions". Its objective: to give examples of good local and regional management. If your region is interested, please contact Hagbarth Publications before 30th September 1999.

Contact: Lou Hagbarth
Fax : +49 76 33 981 665

diary

AUGUST

Friday 27th
Committee A - Istra (HR)

Saturday 28th to Friday 3rd September
Summer School- Istra (HR)

Sunday 29th
Centurio - Introductory meeting Istra (HR)

SEPTEMBER

Friday 10th
Presidium - Brussels (B)

Wednesday 15th and Thursday 16th
Bureau & Plenary Assembly of the CoR Brussels (B)

Wednesday 15th to Saturday 18th
General Assembly of the AEBR Pajhois-Karjala (FIN)

Thursday 23rd and Friday 24th
General Assembly of the CPMR Vaasa (FIN)

Monday 27th and Tuesday 28th
Committee D - Catalunya (E)

Thursday 30th
Seminar "Promotion of Regional Democracy" - Karelia (RUS)

OCTOBER

to be confirmed
Committee C - Calabria (I)

Thursday 7th and Friday 8th
Committee B - Noord-Brabant (NL)

Thursday 14th to Saturday 16th
International Council of AREV - Turin (I)

Wednesday 20th
Bureau of the CoR - Tampere (FIN)

Thursday 21st
Conference "Regions & Enlargement" Wroclaw (PL)

Friday 22nd
Bureau - Wroclaw (PL)

AER Contact: Francine Huhardeaux



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