



On 7th Octobre, 64% of Italians turned out to the urns and said "yes" at the referendum on federalism, thereby confirming the revision of the Italian Constitution adopted in March 2001.

Firstly, it must be stressed that this reform represents an extension of the competences of the Regions, in particular with reference to education, environment and health. The system of competences distribution is now "open", and provides for regional competences in all fields except those reserved for the State. This new aspect is strengthened by the official insertion of the principle of subsidiarity, key to the reform, in the Constitution. According to the new Constitution, in the fields of their competences, the Regions contribute to creating European Community standards and are responsible for their application.

Another key aspect of the reform is the planned creation of an "adjustment fund" by the State, which would allocate funding to Regions with a low tax income per inhabitant. It is important to underline that, in the aim of fairness, and despite a specific reference being made to Mezzogiorno, the Constitution States that any Region may obtain assistance from this fund.

Finally, and under certain conditions, the Constitution provides for the participation of Regions and municipalities in the activities of the Committees of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies responsible for regional issues, whilst awaiting the creation of a new Chamber of the Autonomous Regions.

I welcome this reform which leads towards the full recognition of regional competences and applies the principles promoted by the AER Declaration on Regionalism.

Liese Prokop
Vice-Minister President of Niederösterreich (A)
AER President

PS. The complete analysis of this reform is available on the AER web site

MOSAN EUROSALUTE, 2 - 6 OCTOBER, MILAN-I

The AER, growing actor in Health and Social affairs in Europe



The 19th edition of Mosan EuroSalute, the largest European congress in the field of health and social affairs, took place between the 2nd and 6th October in Milan (I). As a partner in this project, the AER was represented by Mrs Prokop, AER President and Mr Kristoffersen, Committee B President. The AER also organised the 1st meeting between Regional Ministers of Health and Social affairs within the congress.

Mosan Eurosalute, an exhibition space of 4000 m², confirmed its status as the main meeting point for professionals in the health/social sector (industry, service providers, institutions, health authorities...) with its 19th edition and its many Conferences, round tables and workshops. From this year on, the Assembly of European Regions is involved in the organisation of this event as a

member of the Scientific Committee of Mosan alongside of the Region of Lombardia (I) and the Italian Consortium for Medical Research (CIRM), with the support of the European Commission. In particular, the AER is involved in deciding on the themes for debate and participates in making this congress a European-wide event by acting as a relay with the regional authorities in Europe.

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Liese Prokop opens EuroSalute 2001

In the company of Mr Modesta, Vice-President of the European Parliament, Liese Prokop, AER President, gave the opening blast for the Congress. In her speech, she stressed the importance of interregional cooperation as the essential condition for the development of joint projects in a sector which is of such importance for the citizen as health. Participants at the opening ceremony all agreed that the provisions for pensioners are issues which currently concern all of the Regions of Europe.

The President of Committee B - Social cohesion, Social services, Public Health - of the AER, Ragnar

**Under the AER's auspices,
1st meeting of Regional
Health Ministers**



Kristoffersen, co-chaired the Plenary session under the title "from State providence to territorial providence".

Conference of regional Ministers, a successful meeting

Within Mosan EuroSalute, the AER launched the 1st informal meeting between regional Ministers and those in charge of Health and Social affairs which brought together a dozen Ministers and assessors from Länder, Autonomous Communities and Regions from Europe. Among the main issues discussed were: privatisation and the transfer of competences with reference to health services and the establishment of quality criteria leading to the creation of Community standards. Participants unanimously adopted a final Declaration in which they commit themselves to making this event continue and to extending it to all European Regions which wish to be involved in the development of health and Social Security policies in Europe (*document available on the AER web site/Committee B*). Participants arranged to meet again between the 27th and 30th November 2002 for the 20th edition of Mosan EuroSalute.

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CARAVAN ON REGIONALISM IN ROMANIA

The competent Region: the basis for European integration

This was the theme for the fourth AER "caravan" organised with and in the Region of Valcea (RO) on 5th and 6th October 2001.

Around 60 delegates from the Romanian counties, NGOs, national and local institutions, European interregional organisations..... actively participated at this seminar which was organised around two round tables.

The first was preceded by an introduction to the principle of subsidiarity and focused on the position of the Regions vis-à-vis the process of integration. The situation in Romania in view of enlargement was discussed, in particular in comparison with the situation in Poland and Hungary (especially in terms of European funding for pre-accession). The importance of the role of partnership and Liaison offices was also stressed. The rapporteurs at this round table gave useful information which will encourage the Regions to act in future accession processes.

The second round table showed that interregional cooperation may represent a precious tool in enlargement. The role of interregional organisations, such as the AER, the AEBR (Association of European Border Regions), and the AREV (Association of European wine-growing Regions) was highlighted and the Region of Valcea encouraged all Romanian Regions to continue their active participation in AER activities.

Following working activities, the County of Valcea organised an interesting cultural tour.

The conclusions from the caravan, including the rapporteurs' contributions and speeches, are available on the AER web site: <http://www.are-regions-europe.org>

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focus

OVER 500 VISITORS TO THE AER STAND



Mrs Prokop with the Minister from Bayern, Mrs Stewens, and the Secretary of State from Baden-Württemberg, Mrs Lichy

The AER rounded off its engagement in Mosan EuroSalute with an information stand. Over 500 visitors and exhibitors came to the stand and collected both general and specific information on the AER or AER Committee B and its activities. In this way, they discovered the role of the AER and its initiatives in favour of citizen well-being.

The stand also provided information on interregional projects such as "Services and protection for pensioners" and "Alive", which are supported by the AER and try to face the

problems related to an ageing European population in a practical manner. The Land of Baden-Württemberg (D), very active in the field of health, shared the AER stand. The Region of Lombardia had its own promotional space.

The new AER stand (*see photo*) is at the disposal of all members. If you wish to use this stand at your Conferences or European meetings, contact the Press and Communications Service at the Secretariat.

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21ST SEPTEMBER 2001 – KARLSTAD – VÄRMLAND (S)

Main Bureau decisions in Karlstad



The AER Bureau met in Sweden, for the first time since the meeting in Lund (Scanie) on 27th June 1997, on 21st September 2001 in Karlstad, Capital of the Council of Värmland.

At the initiative of Mrs Liese Prokop, Bureau members held one minute silence in memory of the victims of the terrorist attack which hit the United States of America on 11th September last. A message of sympathy was sent to the National Governors Association of the United States on this occasion.

The most important point on the agenda was, without question, the nomination of a candidate for the position of Secretary General. After having taken note of the withdrawal of one candidate, Bureau members interviewed the two

remaining candidates in depth. Following these interviews and on the basis of the results given by an assessment centre, the Bureau unanimously decided to present Mr Klaus Klipp as the candidate for the General Assembly in Sopron (29th and 30th November 2001).

Another important point on the agenda for the Bureau meeting was the political discussion concerning the Committee A document "European Constitutional Framework" and the second Conference of Regions with legislative powers due to be held on 15th and 16th November 2001 in Liège. Concerning the Committee A document, it was agreed that Mr Philip Johnsson would update the AER document on governance whilst bearing in mind the proposals made in the White paper by the European Commission on this subject. Concerning the Conference, it was agreed that Mrs Prokop would make the necessary contacts with Regions with legislative powers in Liège.

The Bureau approved the draft agenda for the General Assembly in 2001 which, for the first time, will be held in an EU applicant country, Hungary, in the town of Sopron. In addition to

the election of the Statutory Auditor and the amendments to the Rules of Procedure, this General Assembly will be, as is the case every year, the opportunity to report on the activities of the AER Committees and programmes and to define our priorities for the coming year. Please note that an award for the most youth-friendly Region will be accorded this year for the first time.

Mr Claude Ruey, Vice-President Treasurer, confirmed the good financial status of the AER. The Bureau subsequently and unanimously approved the administrative accounts for 2000 and the draft budget for 2002.

Committee Presidents and programme leaders then reported on recent activities, proof of the hard work and vitality of the organisation.

The Bureau unanimously approved the amendments to the Rules of Procedure which intend to adapt this document in accordance with the amendments to the Statutes adopted at the General Assembly in Seinäjoki (7th and 8th December 2000).

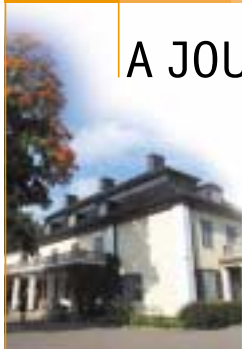
The Bureau took note of the progress report on preparations for the Vienna II summit planned for Spring 2002 and which should bring together the Presidents of the AER, of the member interregional organisations, the CEMR, the CLRAE and the CoR, in the Austrian Capital. Several themes have been considered for this second summit (the first took place in June 1995): European governance and Regions with legislative powers, regional policy and economic, social and territorial cohesion, Trans-European Networks, sustainable agriculture and the protection of the rural world (*see article page 7*).

The next European Cup of Regional Flavours will be organised by the Portuguese Region of Alentejo which will follow Poitou-Charentes, Languedoc-Roussillon, and the Belgian and Dutch provinces of Limburg in hosting this event.

Finally, the Bureau considered the means for the AER to act in case of natural catastrophe in member Regions in order to effectively use the interregional solidarity which we have so often seen on such occasions.

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A JOURNEY TO MÅRBACKA...



Home of Selma Lagerlöf, Mårbacka

AER meetings provide the occasion (often too short!) to have a quick look at the countryside and the culture of the host Region. The Bureau in Karlstad did not fail to keep this tradition.

The official dinner of 20th September was hosted in the original background of the Värmland museum in Karlstad. Bureau members were able to go back in time for an evening, through the history of this so typically Swedish Region.

The sightseeing tour on Saturday was awaited with impatience: the trip was to Mårbacka, the home of the famous Swedish author and winner of the Nobel prize for literature, Selma Lagerlöf. Thanks to the talent of a guide, who cunningly gave participants the impression that they knew the author of "The wonderful adventures of Nils" and "Gösta Berling's saga" personally, this trip out was, according to all participants, a grand success. In addition to coming face to face with the exceptional personality of Selma Lagerlöf, the AER delegation was able to take a quick look at the history and literature of Sweden. The journey to Mårbacka took participants through the hills, lakes and forests of Värmland described by this great writer. A hearty thank you to the County of Värmland and to Mrs Ulla Hoglund in particular for having organised this excursion.

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EURODYSEY



At the Forum in Lugano, there was work to be done!

On 27th and 28th September, the annual Eurodysey Forum took place in Lugano, Tessin (CH). This forum brings together the leaders of this programme from the partner Regions and the representatives of Regions interested in joining the programme. Chaired by the cantonal authorities of Tessin, the Regional Council of Franche-Comté (F) and the AER, participants exchanged their experience and discussed the future for the programme.

In 2001, new Regions such as Brussels-Capital (B) or Madeira (P), joined the programme for the first time with much success. Other Regions such as Alba or Brasov (RO), found their respective peer Regions prior to joining: Franche-Comté (F) and Wallonia (B). At 31st May, roughly 500 placements had been organised and Eurodysey members have decided to break the record from 2000 of 850 placements.

Participants then looked at the amendments to the Eurodysey founder texts, which attempt to avoid practical problems which have come up, in the future. Following lively debate, a proposal was drawn up and will be submitted to the AER General Assembly for approval at the end of November 2001 in Sopron (H).

Many Regions offered to host the next Forum, despite the costs occurred in organising a European-wide event, such is the enthusiasm over Eurodysey from all those who are actively involved. The offers from Istra-HR (2002), Rhône-Alpes-F (2003) and Madeira-P (2004) finally won the day.

Once again, our thanks go out to Giorgio Weit, Nadia Bariffi and the team from Tessin for their excellent organisation and kindness.



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SUMMER SCHOOL 2001

Enlargement and sustainable development at the heart of debate



200 participants took part in the AER Summer School which was held between the 26th and the 30th of August at Neptun, on the edge of the Black Sea, in the Region of Constanta (RO). On the attendance list were the AER Vice-President, Mr Van Nistelrooij, who took this opportunity to meet the Romanian member Regions, as well as representatives from European organisations such as the CLRAE and the European Commission (Bucarest delegation) which helped to finance the event. Western Regions were widely present (Austria, Belgium, Sweden, the United Kingdom...) alongside of Regions from Eastern and Central Europe (Poland, Hungary, Romania, Croatia, Moldavia, the Czech Republic and Russia).

The first session "Regions and EU enlargement" dealt with the contribution of the Regions to new European governance and, in particular, the involvement of local and regional bodies in accession.

Two sessions focused on sustainable rural development, one looking at extensive agriculture and food safety, and the other

dealing with tourism. Both sessions led to lively debate and much exchange of experience between participants. The impact of European territorial planning policies on sustainable development was also highlighted at the closing session which concentrated on the organisation of the European area and future European regional policy.

Participants particularly appreciated the interactive workshops, of which there were several, which encouraged increased mutual knowledge and promoted the cultural programme offered by the host Region.

Our thanks go to the organising Committee - Constanta, Friuli Venezia-Giulia, Gloucestershire, Noord-Brabant, Thüringen, Uppsala and Wien - for this lively programme and successful debates.

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CENTURIO 2001

A real success

35 candidates on 44 work placements are currently feeling the advantages of this training programme for territorial representatives from Eastern and Central Europe (9 candidates having two work placements).

72 applications were received for Centurio 2001, mainly from Romanian (31), Polish (15), Croatian (6) and Hungarian (5) candidates. Out of the 35 chosen candidates, Poland and Romania were the winners with 12 trainees each.

The figures show that German speaking Regions accept a large number of candidates - a total of 12 for Germany, Austria and Switzerland - despite the language barrier, very few trainees spoke German. Following the German speaking countries come Belgium, Portugal and Italy. A special mention must be made of the Regions which accepted several trainees: Brussels-Capital (5), Yorkshire & Humberside/Brussels Office (4), Thüringen (4) and Puglia (4).

Centurio 2001 was divided into three phases: the introductory seminar bringing together trainees and coordinators, which took place in parallel with the AER Summer School, the work placements in the Regions between September and December and an evaluation seminar which will be organised, at the invitation of the Region of Brussels-Capital, on 14th December in Brussels.

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29TH AND 30TH NOVEMBER 2001, SOPRON, HUNGARY

General Assembly of the Regions of Europe

At the invitation of Mr Ivanics, President of the Hungarian County of Győr-Moson-Sopron, the AER General Assembly will be held in a Region in Central Europe for the very first time. Participants are expected from Wednesday 28th November. For those arriving at Vienna airport, a shuttle service has been organised for the journey to Sopron. Take a look at the programme for this Assembly.



Welcome to Sopron

Győr-Moson-Sopron county is situated in the north-western part of Hungary, including the Small Plane, the foot of the Alps and Bakony. Győr-Moson-Sopron is the 13th biggest county in Hungary (4088 km² for 424 000 inhabitants, of which 55% of them live in the towns). The regional capital, Győr, has almost 130 000 inhabitants.

Győr-Moson-Sopron county shares borders with Austria and Slovakia. The county is called the gate of the West, served by 8 road and 4 railway border crossing points. Access to touristic areas is easier thanks to motorways, fast roads and new border crossing points. Many cycle routes have been built and there are two crossing points which are only open to cyclists and pedestrians. The county is rich in partly navigable waters. The port of Göny is already in use, and the dredging of the Danube will increase profitability. The County has several aerodromes and the one in Pér has the greatest chance to become a regional airport.

Győr-Moson-Sopron county is the second wealthiest area - after Budapest - in almost everything. The property structure has changed, its characteristics are private property and competition with a great deal of foreign investment. A good climate encourages the agricultural sector (mostly red fruit and grapes) and animal husbandry (mostly beef, pork and fowl) is an old tradition with very good results. Győr-Moson-Sopron has the highest GDP and a low unemployment rate (4% in May 1999), only beaten by Budapest. The northern part of the county is important not only as a traffic corridor, but as an organic part of the Budapest- Vienna innovation zone.

The tourist industry is of high quality and developed in a very dynamical way. Tourism creates employment possibilities in areas which were previously in difficulties.

Natural conditions are varied, you can find a small model of the Carpathian Basin here. Part of the natural environment is protected (altogether approx. 48 000 ha.), but there are large areas waiting for national protection. The architecture of Győr-Moson-Sopron county, inhabited since the Stone Age, is remarkable. The county has - because of its transit character - seen more armies than peaceful caravans.

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THURSDAY 29TH NOVEMBER

09.00 – 12.00

- Bureau meeting (Bureau members and their assistants)
- Seminar organised by the County of Győr-Moson-Sopron (Other participants)

12.00 – 14.00

Lunch

14.00 – 18.00

General Assembly

14.00 – 15.30

- Welcome speeches
- Adoption of the draft agenda
- Approval of the minutes from the General Assembly in Seinäjoki
- Membership
- Financial issues
- Amendments to the Rules of Procedure
- Election of the AER Secretary General

16.00 – 18.00

- Activity report of the AER President and Vice-Presidents
- Activity reports from the AER Committees and programmes
- Action plan 2002 and provisional meeting dates
- Draft budget 2002

20.00

Official Dinner (at the invitation of Mr Ivanics, President of the County)

FRIDAY 30TH NOVEMBER

08.30 – 09.30

Presidium meeting

09.30 – 13.00

General Assembly

09.30 – 12.00

Round table: The Enlargement of the European Union and European Governance

12.00 – 12.30

Award ceremony of the prize for the most Youth-friendly Region

12.30 – 13.00

Conclusions and adoption of a final declaration

13.00 – 13.30

Press conference

13.00 – 15.00

Lunch (at the invitation of the Association of Hungarian Counties)

15.00

Transfers to Vienna airport or a guided tour of the town for delegates remaining in Sopron

SATURDAY 1ST DECEMBER

Morning: Sightseeing tour of the Region of Sopron or transfers to Vienna airport

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Ladies and Gentlemen,



One of the important decisions of the previous General Assembly of the Assembly of European Regions, having taken place in Finland last December the 8th-9th, was that organising and implementing of the next General Assembly would be given to the County of Győr-Moson-Sopron, Hungary. Győr-Moson-Sopron and the other Hungarian counties are very pleased with this decision: this is the first time that a General Assembly will be held in a Region in a EU Applicant country.

We are honoured that the host is Sopron, twin town of Seinäjoki, where the last General Assembly took place.

We intend to organise the program of the event so that parallel with the thorough, substantial work participants can be acquainted with the places of interest of Sopron, one of the best known towns in Hungarian historical heritage.

Our first goal is that the General Assembly of the Assembly of European Regions be as successful as possible, that attendants leave Hungary with pleasant memories and in their countries support Hungary's efforts towards European Union membership.

I hope we may welcome you in November the 29th-30th 2001 in Sopron, "The City of Fidelity".

Győr, September the 29th 2001. Yours sincerely,
Ferenc Ivanics, President of the General Assembly of Győr-Moson-Sopron, host of the event



Who's afraid of the Constitution?

BY DR CLAU-PETER CLOSTERMEYER, DIRECTOR OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS OF THE CHANCELLERY OF THE LAND OF BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG

A rumour has been running since last year: the debate on a Constitution is open, even if this term scares more than a few. And so, in Nice, did something else happen? The issues "definition of competences", "democratic authorisation", "fundamental rights" and "transparency" are already on the agenda. Is there a more important project than bringing together the complex set of European regulations under these four principles before 2004? This assignment brings up memories of the experience of one of the forefathers of European Constitutional thinking: laws, disconcerting due to their diversity, jump into order by themselves when the principles behind them are clear. This continues to apply today, the idea is to find a logical way of classifying the last ten years' regulations. As the thinking behind laws was important for Montesquieu, the essence behind European integration is our key aspect.

A precise Treaty covering all of the fundamental citizens' rights, a complete classification of competences, political institutions and a procedure for decision-making: that is the definition of a Constitution. It goes without saying that the Constitutional models of member States cannot be applied to the EU as the Union is one of citizens, States, Regions and Municipalities. Such a constitutional text would become a framework for the whole of Europe following enlargement.

A regional debate

Caught between two walls, the citizens and the European institutions, the Regions may transfer the ideas and desires of the citizens and/or of the organisations representing them in the European debate. In this way they put forward the principle of subsidiarity, key concept of the European Union. The Regions are the European actors within the Committee of the Regions and have long acted on "governance", another key concept today.

For this reason, today, the Regions call for a precise catalogue of competences leaving them sufficient room for manoeuvre to organise the living conditions of their citizens. The idea is to distribute tasks, which would allow the EU to take on new responsibilities not only in strategic areas, but also in areas where the member States, Regions and Municipalities need freedom of movement. In order to obtain both solid and yet flexible regulations, we need a independent institution which would rule on competence-related issues and upon which the member States, the Committee of the Regions and Regions with legislative powers could call. Such a system would ally stability with dynamic action and give new life to the competence procedures.

To reply to the title: the Regions have no reason to fear a European Constitution. This would provide the opportunity to construct a Europe for the Regions and the citizens.



Democracy in focus

BY PHILIP JOHNSSON, VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE COUNTY OF VÄRMLAND, RAPPORTEUR OF THE AER GROUP "EUROPEAN GOVERNANCE"

The European Commission's White Paper on new European Governance is a reply to the gap between the EU citizens and the EU institutions. The expectations of the outcome from the politicians to solve the problems in society are substantial. At the same time the mistrust concerning the institutions and politics is growing. Both **decentralization** and **participation** are of the greatest importance and will partly give the answer for solving the question of mistrust. The Citizens must have the possibility to participate in developing their society - including between elections.

Today, the legitimacy of the EU is built upon cooperation and participation. "Vertical" decision-making must be replaced by a "horizontal model" built upon response, networking and broad participation on all levels, from drafting to practicing.

Representative democracy and the role of the Regions are fundamental!
Representative democracy enables the citizens to

elect their regional representatives. The system creates legitimacy as it provides the citizens with the opportunity to influence policy-making and to make their politicians accountable for the policies pursued and delivered. The dialogue with the citizens should be conducted by the elected representatives on the regional level who are their appropriate leaders. These elected representatives' competences may restrain contradictory interests and goals. Democratic legitimacy and the demand on responsibilities are basic issues which must be deeply discussed for developing new governance for the European Union.

Regional self governance gives the citizens the possibility to make their voices clearly heard and it is of the greatest importance that regions and county councils may take decisions concerning topics of importance for the citizens. The proximity to decision-making gives influence on importance issues in citizens' daily life. The principle of subsidiarity must be highlighted and clarified.

A systematic consultation process between the Commission and the regions should be built up

and the Committee of the Regions will be an important platform and a channel for democratically sanctioned views from the regional (and the local) level to be transmitted. The Committee of the Region's independent position should be reinforced and their elected representatives' democratic seats should be respected. For guaranteeing their influence a constitutional form should be built up.

The AER will have an important role to play in the future of Europe. Through its members the organization has intimate knowledge of the conditions in different countries and one of its tasks will be to discuss and to develop the democratic, regional level together with the applicant countries.

When citizens may influence decision-making, politics will have legitimacy. The Commission has, through the White Paper, stressed the importance of a change in the consultation process between EU institutions and the regional representatives. I welcome this initiative!

Objective "Vienna II"...

After her election as AER President, on 7th and 8th December 2000 in St-Pölten, Mrs Liese Prokop committed herself to giving new impetus to cooperation between the AER and the twelve member interregional organisations. In parallel, Mrs Prokop also desired to extend this cooperation to new interregional organisations having come into existence since 1995, and to the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), with which the AER has collaborated for many years. Alongside of this initiative, the AER President also aimed to reinforce and organise dialogue with the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities in Europe (CLRAE, Council of Europe) and the Committee of the Regions (CoR, European Union).

The objective set by Mrs Prokop: to better coordinate the respective activities of these organisations, and to try and work together, whenever cooperation would increase the effectiveness or the quality of the services offered to the Regions.

... Spring 2002

With this in mind, on 5th July 2001, the 7th meeting between the Secretary Generals of the twelve member interregional organisations was held in Strasbourg. For the first time ever representatives from the CEMR, the CLRAE and the CoR participated at this meeting. They took advantage of this occasion to discuss the themes behind a "Vienna II" summit: European governance and Regions with legislative powers,

regional policy and economic, social and territorial cohesion, transport networks, sustainable agricultural policies and the protection of the rural world, all of these themes being looked at in consideration of the enlargement of the European Union.

Other initiatives were taken on this occasion, in particular the launch of the drawing up of a presentation brochure of the interregional organisations involved in this initiative (see article page 8). Better coordination of meeting dates was another point for investigation. A further meeting between Secretary Generals was held on 29th October 2001 in Strasbourg. With reference to the "Vienna II" summit, this could take place in the Austrian Capital in Spring 2002, following-up the initiative of 1995.

The follow-up to the Summit of 1995

On 21st June 1995, at the same time as the celebrations of the 10th anniversary of the AER, in the Town hall of Vienna, the first Summit of the Presidents of member interregional organisations was held. Mr Jordi Pujol, the Presidents and Secretary Generals of the twelve AER member interregional organisations met in the Austrian Capital and discussed the role of the Regions in the new construction of Europe, a new organisation of the regional level in Europe and the development of interregional cooperation. These were, indeed, the themes of the political declaration that they adopted on this occasion. Following this initial summit, the



Presidents and Secretary Generals met with Federal Chancellor Vranitzky.

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AER member interregional organisations:

Assembly of European Wine-growing Regions (AREV), European Association of Regions with Industrial Technology (RETI), Association of European Border Regions (AEBR), Working Community of the Adriatic Alps (ALPEN ADRIA), Working Community of the Alpine Countries (ARGE ALP), Working Community of the Western Alps (COTRAO), Working Community of the Lower and Middle Adriatic, Working Community of Galicia-North Portugal, Working Community of the Jura (CTJ), Working Community of the Danube Countries (ARGE DONAULÄNDER), Working Community of the Pyrenees (CTP) and the Conference of Peripheral and Maritime Regions (CPMR).

notebook

GENERAL ELECTIONS IN POLAND

Mr Leszek Miller was elected Prime Minister at the general elections on 23rd September 2001. The alliance between the Democratic left (SLD) and the Socialist workers' Union (UP) obtained 41% of votes, i.e. 216 seats in the Diet. With a deficit of 15 seats from an absolute majority, SLD-UP formed a coalition with PSL (Traditional rural party) which had won 8.98% of votes, i.e. 42 seats. As stated in the Polish Constitution, the outgoing Prime Minister will resign at the first session of the new Parliament and Leszek Miller will enter immediately into office.

GENERAL ELECTIONS IN NORWAY

The right gained the majority with 87 seats out of the 165 in the Storting. The left won 77 seats. The Labour party obtained its lowest figure since 1909 with 24% of votes.

REGIONAL ELECTIONS IN GALICIA

Manuel Fraga Iribarne (PP) was re-elected on 21st October 2001 for his fourth mandate.

AREV

Mr Luís Braga da Cruz is now the Minister for Economy in Portugal and has therefore been obliged to cede his position as President of his Region (Norte) and, by the same token, as President of AREV. Mr Sanz Alonso, President of the Region of La Rioja, has been nominated as his successor by the AREV international Council.

internet

www.are-regions-europe.org

A NEW HOME PAGE



Since October, the home page of the AER Web site has received a face-lift, to go along with the total new look for the AER. Thanks to the help of new technology, downloading is now a question of seconds even for members with modem-based systems.

The same goes for surfing on our pages: from now on members with Internet Explorer 4.5 or Netscape 6.0 may use our pop-up menus to directly access the page they need.

At their request, AER Committees are now able to announce their events and other news items on the home page under our "Events and latest news" column.

Other pages within our Web site have also been slightly modified. The Forum page is now covering an AER youth forum and is accessible from any other site page. Future developments: Extranet - the second generation, internal search function....

AER CONTACT:

Barbara Skoczylas-Thauront - bthauront@are-regions-europe.org

AER ACTIVITIES: August - October 2001

Political meetings and events

- AER hearing on Governance by the Constitutional Affairs Committee of the European Parliament (*P Johansson, Brussels, 12/09*)
- Mosan EuroSalute Partnership (*L Prokop, R Kristoffersen, Milan, 2-6/10*)
- Meeting with the Czech Regions (*L Prokop, Budweis, 5/10*)
- Participation at the Conference of Heads of Regional Governments organised by Arge Donauländer (*P De Martin, Russe, 12/10*)
- Meeting between the Secretary Generals of member interregional organisations and the CEMR, the CoR and the CLRAE (*Strasbourg, 29/10*)
- Meeting with the Ukrainian Regions: Donets'ka and Dniepropetrovs'ka Oblast (*J Waszkiewicz, Krzywowa, 19/09*)

Member contact

- Meeting with the Presidents of the Romanian Regions (*L van Nistelrooij, Tulcea, 25/08*)
- Participation at the XXXth anniversary of the AEBR (*J P Heider, Strasbourg, 20-21/09*)

FLOODING IN POLAND

Following the call for help from the President of the Region of Swietokrzyskie (PL) and from the AER President, several Regions such as Adjaria (GEO), Alsace (F), Basel-town and Fribourg (CH), Heves, Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok and Zala (H), Hunedoara (RO), Thüringen (D) and Steiermark (A) have accorded financial and/or logistic assistance for the population of this Region.

Other AER meetings

- Summer School (*Neptun, 26-30/08*)
- Centurio introductory seminar (*Neptun, 28/08*)
- Political Bureau (*Karlstad, 21/09*)
- Eurodissey Forum (*Lugano, 27-28/09*)
- Caravan "The competent Region: the basis of European integration" (*Valcea, 5-6/10*)
- Conference on suicide (*Cork, 12-13/10*)
- Committee B (*Tilburg, 25-26/10*)

Press & Communications

- Full face-lift for the AER (stand, newsletter, Web site, programme support material ...)
- AER promotion campaign (new brochure distribution)
- Presence at the Mosan EuroSalute exhibition fair
- Preparation of an "AER Guidebook for members"
- Development of a new programme for the Extranet

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:
www.are-regions-europe.org

publications

NEW EDITION OF THE BROCHURE OF THE INTERREGIONAL ORGANISATIONS



At the meeting of the Secretary Generals of the AER member interregional organisations, last July, it was suggested that the AER update its "Interregional Organisations" brochure, of which stocks have been long since emptied, and bring out a 2002 edition for the Vienna II Summit.

The AER Press and Communications Service is proud to take on this project, and will also add the publication of

this brochure on the AER Web site, in the form of a data base, which could later be opened up to other organisations and interregional networks in Europe.

In order to make this project go as smoothly as possible, since the 1st October we have made a form available on the Web site in three languages. In order to use this form, simply head for the page which is dedicated to member interregional organisations - <http://www.are-regions-europe.org/COMMUN/A15bbis.html> - or go via the home page (Who are we? - Members - Member interregional organisations), fill in the relevant boxes in at least one of the three listed languages and then click on "Send". The information will arrive at the AER Press and Communications Service who will then publish it on the AER Web site as it comes in. The print version of the Brochure will be available in Spring 2002. We would like to thank you for your assistance in this project.

AER CONTACT: *Barbara Skoczylas-Thauront* / bthauront@are-regions-europe.org

diary

NOVEMBER

Thursday 1st to Friday 2nd

Conference of the AER group "Equal opportunities for men and women" *Stockholm/Dalarna (S)*

Friday 2nd to Saturday 3rd

AER Committee C - *Istra (HR)*

Friday 2nd to Saturday 3rd

Forum of Cities and Regions of South-East Europe of the CLRAE - *Istanbul (TR)*

Saturday 3rd

AER meeting with the Croatian Regions *Istra (HR)*

Monday 5th to Tuesday 6th

Conference on Enlargement "The new forms of governance and local and regional democracy in Europe" by the CoR and the Greek Home Office and Ministry of Public Administration and Decentralisation *Athens (GR)*

Thursday 8th

RETI General Assembly - *Budapest (H)*

Thursday 8th to Friday 9th

AER Committee D - *Castries (F)*

Tuesday 13th to Thursday 15th

CoR Bureau and Plenary session - *Brussels (B)*

Thursday 15th

Meeting between the AER President and the Presidents of the Italian Regions - *Liège (B)*

Thursday 15th to Friday 16th

2nd Conference of Regions with legislative powers - *Liège (B)*

Thursday 22th

AER Committee A - *Stuttgart (D)*

Thursday 29th to Friday 30th

AER Bureau and General Assembly - *Sopron (H)*

DECEMBER

Friday 14th

AER Centurio programme - Evaluation seminar *Brussels (B)*

Friday 14th to Saturday 15th

European Council Summit - *Laeken (B)*

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AER en direct - AER on line VRE direkt - AUTUMN 2001
The Assembly of European Regions' newsletter

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