



ASSEMBLÉE DES RÉGIONS D'EUROPE
ASSEMBLY OF EUROPEAN REGIONS
VERSAMMLUNG DER REGIONEN EUROPAS
ASAMBLEA DE LAS REGIONES DE EUROPA
ASSEMBLEA DELLE REGIONI D'EUROPA

Strasbourg, 24th February 2000

Note from the Assembly of European Regions

The Chechnyan crisis:

The AER expresses its concern and confirms its wish to contribute to a political solution which respects the principles of Regionalism.

The AER Presidium expresses its concern regarding the situation in Chechnya. It deplores the suffering of the civil population and supports the appeal launched by the international community in view of restoring peace and the respect of human rights in Chechnya. In this line of thought, the AER Presidium stresses the importance of the action undertaken by the European Commission and the members of the European Union and by the authorities of the Council of Europe within the Russian Federal authorities in order to oblige these authorities to guarantee the respect of human rights in this Region.

The AER Presidium, in particular, salutes the brave action taken by the acting President of the Committee of Ministers at the time, David Andrews (Irish), as well as the action taken by the delegation of the Parliamentary Assembly led by its President, Lord Russel-Johnston, who - between the 14th and the 20th January 2000 - had various interviews on the subject of Chechnya with the highest federal authorities in Russia and the representatives of the Regions of Northern Caucasia.

In addition, the AER Presidium supports the efforts made by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities in Europe, which - on 14th January 2000 - confirmed its availability in the search for a political solution based on the respect of the principle of regional autonomy.

The AER Presidium warns against the dangers of systematic and violent violation of people's rights for the stability of our continent. It states, once again, as the AER Bureau did regarding the crisis in Kosovo, that only the values of regionalism - such as the respect for people's rights and diversities, interregional and cross-border cooperation as a factor of political stability and the principle of political autonomy on a regional level are the basis of a democratic federalism and can therefore offer an efficient solution to the current problems and prevent new conflicts from arising.

The Presidium stresses that these values constitute the foundation of AER action and, in this context, refers to the AER declaration on regionalism, which was adopted by all the AER member Regions to ensure the implementation of these values at European level.

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The Presidium stresses, in particular, the importance of the AER's role as an independent and democratic forum for dialogue and cooperation between regional entities and, on this basis, its role as a possible mediator between regional, national and European authorities.

The Presidium is convinced that the AER can contribute to the efforts of the international community to restore peace and maintain democratic stability in the Region. It is prepared to mobilise AER member Regions in order to put their institutional and political experience, as well as their numerous achievements in interregional cooperation, at the service of those involved. The Presidium invites the Russian Regions to rejoin, in the immediate future, the community of the Regions of Europe, side by side with those which are already AER members.

Finally, the AER supports the message of Union members to the Russian government in view of installing international observers through the Council of Europe and the OSCE.

The Presidium entrusts the AER President to take any initiative aiming at ensuring the contribution of the AER in the action undertaken by the international community.

The AER is the political movement of the Regions, committed since 1985 to the promotion of regionalism in Europe and to the development of interregional cooperation.

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