



ASSEMBLÉE DES RÉGIONS D'EUROPE
ASSEMBLY OF EUROPEAN REGIONS
VERSAMMLUNG DER REGIONEN EUROPAS
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Press Release

The AER at the Johannesburg Summit: Initial reactions and future projects

Ten days of tough negotiations at expert and political level were finalised in Johannesburg yesterday when world leaders adopted a plan of action and solemnly reaffirmed principles for sustainable development meant to bring about a better planet.

The AER representatives in Johannesburg illustrated the assets of a full implementation of the principles of subsidiarity, partnership and proximity. By concrete examples, they showed how regions act in favour of economic, territorial and social cohesion.

Mere hours after his arrival from the Johannesburg Summit, one of the AER representatives Mr Thomas Hagg, Councillor from Jämtland (S) was willing to share his first impressions with colleagues - members of the AER.

“The world expected the Johannesburg Summit (WSSD) to make significant progress towards eradicating poverty and protecting the environment. In order to live up to these expectations, concrete measures will be necessary, of course, to implement the WSSD plan of action”, Mr Hagg said. He also stated: “The Summit raised the awareness of all sectors of society about the need for a global commitment for sustainable development. The sense of inevitability provoked indeed a strong mobilisation of local and regional authorities, non-government organisations, the private sector and civil society. Sustainable development is not only a question of environmental protection. It is mainly a matter of political commitment in favour of democracy, participation and Human Rights. The European regions are indispensable pillars of the institutional framework and the partnership initiatives which will implement the WSSD plan of action.”

The AER will further develop co-operation with all other active regional and local stakeholders (International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives-ICLEI and the newly established Regional Government Network for Sustainable Development) as a preparation of the forthcoming AER Interregional European Summit on Sustainable Development to be organised in 2003.

AER Contact:

Laura De Rose and Agnès Ciccarone, Regional policy Committee (Tel. +33 3 88 22 74 38 or 37) - Fax. +33 3 88 75 67 19 - Email. lderoose@a-e-r.org ou a.ciccarone@a-e-r.org

Immeuble Europe, 20 place des Halles, F – 67054 STRASBOURG Cedex (France)
Téléphone (+33) 3 88 22 07 07 – Téléfax (+33) 3 88 75 67 19
E-mail : secretariat@are-regions-europe.org ou infopresse@are-regions-europe.org