



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

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Press release

From Naples to Copenhagen: message from the European Regions

A few days prior to the European Council meeting in Copenhagen, the political representatives of the 250 member regions of the Assembly of European Regions (AER), on the occasion of the General Assembly in Naples the 28th and 29th of November 2002, drew the attention of Heads of State and Government to the importance of the principle of subsidiarity as a condition for a Europe built by all its citizens. *“In an enlarged and more complex Europe, it is essential to allow for the increased participation of the local and regional authorities in the decision-making and legislative processes on the European level”* stressed the common Declaration adopted in Naples.

Concerned by the fact that the work of the Convention of the Future of Europe has not up to this point taken account of the strategic role of the regions in the European institutional architecture, the Regions request the consolidation of the points made in the *“White Paper on European Governance”* and the Laeken Declaration into the draft constitutional treaty, in other words to recognise the territorial communities as partners in the EU. *“The European project is above all a project for our citizens. If there really is the will to create a European Union closer to them, and we know there is political consensus on this matter, this Union will not advance and be strong unless it is firmly rooted in the regions”* urged Liese Prokop, President of the AER. *“We hope that the draft of the European constitution allows our democratically elected parliaments and regional assemblies to become the 3rd pillar of legitimacy in Europe next to the national parliaments and the European Parliament”* added Antonio Bassolino, President of the Campania Region, the host of the AER.

In welcoming the upcoming entry of the new Member States of the EU, the regions of the AER took advantage of this meeting in Naples to animate the development perspectives of interregional co-operation in Europe. As an engine for European integration, this co-operation must serve to deepen enlargement and to re-instate the balance between the North and South of Europe. In this context, the regions request the creation of a legal framework for co-operation, harmonised at the European level, and the availability of the necessary resources, specifically concerning the education of the European youth towards the management of international projects.

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Created in 1985, the AER is a political organisation of the Regions in Europe and the speaker for their interests at European and International level. Its mission is to bring the Regions of Europe together to allow them to be actors in the construction of Europe and European integration. The AER has 250 member Regions from 28 European Countries and 12 interregional organisations.