



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

PRESS RELEASE

European Parliament denies direct access of Regions to European Court

The European Parliament at its Strasbourg -Plenary session on the January 14, 2003 adopted the Napolitano-report on the role of regional and local authorities in Europe. The report itself is regarded by the regions as a positive step forward in strengthening the role of the local and regional authorities. In the substantial matter of subsidiarity it falls short of the regions' expectations.

The Parliament blocked with 268 against 235 votes all proposals to give regions and territorial entities the right to go to the European Court of Justice in case they are convinced their prerogatives and rights have been infringed by community acts.

With this narrow vote the European Parliament declared itself in opposition to one of the major demands put forward by the AER and even supported by the Parliament's own Committee on Constitutional Affairs to be inserted in the constitutional treaty presently prepared by the Convention.

The amendment to the report of Giorgio Napolitano on the role of the regional and local authorities was tabled by Méndez de Vigo and supported by German deputies Joachim Wuermeling and Ursula Schleicher and Guido Bodrato from Italy on behalf of the PPE-DE Group allows regional access to the Court of Justice only under the authority of the member State concerned, according to their constitutional or national legislation.

The decision of the Parliament reflects basically the preoccupations of the Spanish Government, which is strongly opposed against direct access of its regions and autonomous Communities to European Institutions. There has also been some opposition to the regional demand by the European Commission, as stated in the debate by Commissioner Barnier.

AER-Vice-President Peter Straub, President of the Baden-Wuerttemberg State-Parliament expressed deep dismay and concern about the decision, describing it as a serious set back for all initiatives, which struggle to build a more democratic European Union that should be rooted in the regions and based on full involvement, participation and recognition of regions and local authorities. Mr. Straub nevertheless expressed the hope that the decision will not predetermine the deliberations of the Convention, which in his opinion is bound to take a more constructive and democratic view.

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