



Consiglio Regionale
del Veneto



Unioncamere
Veneto



CALRE
Working Group "Financial Federalism"

Working Program 2013

February 2013

1. Introduction

This document describes the activity program for 2013 of the Working Group “Financial Federalism” coordinated by the Regional Council of the Veneto Region for six years in the CALRE context.

For the proposals and the topics discussed, the working plan is the natural continuation of previous activities and is consistent with the documents presented and discussed during several meetings of the Working Group “Financial Federalism”¹.

In light of the results achieved, during 2013 the Regional Council is going to deepen some financial aspects related to federalism as a fundamental way to build and affirm the ‘Europe of the regions’.

¹ For more details please refer to the final documents of the Working Group “Financial Federalism”, presented between 2008 and 2012 on the occasion of the Plenary sessions of the CALRE.

2. Main goals

The analysis work carried out in 2012 has shown a sharp slowdown in those processes of decentralization of powers and resources from the Centre to the Periphery that had joined many European countries since the early nineties, as shown by the analysis of the public finances of local governments in the European countries.

This is mainly due to the reduction of central cash flows that many countries have experienced in the last years, in order to correct the trend in their public finances.

As a result, the financial crisis has exacerbated the tensions between regions and national governments, especially where there are most significant economic contributions from the Periphery to the budgets of the national level. The problem of the transfer of resources then is shared by various European regions, and it makes it essential to reflect on the “models” of existing financial federalism, in order to identify the common characteristics and the best practices to inspire future national policies.

With these preliminary remarks, the Regional Council of Veneto during 2012 has worked to promote the exchange of opinions and ideas among legislative assemblies of the European countries participating in the Working Group on “Financial Federalism” and to present the outcomes of this debate to the European institutions.

The working group now aims to provide a new input to scheduled events by involving, in its actions, the subjects who carry a federalist spirit of European inspiration. Therefore, we propose again to:

- **maintain the monitoring of financial flows between central and local levels of government and the analysis of their impact on the real economy, including assessment of what has been the effects of national anti-crisis measures on local authorities’ budgets and autonomy;**
- **carry out a survey of Member of the European Parliament (MEPs) elected in European Regions with Legislative Assemblies;**
- **create a network of coordination between MEPs identified, aimed at involvement in the activities of CALRE and a more effective lobbying in the European Parliament;**
- **organize a series of meetings between MEPs and the Presidents of the Regional Assemblies that belong to the CALRE’s Working Group “Financial Federalism”, to be held in Brussels.**

The proposal to create a network of MEPs on these issues, if realized, could serve to strengthen the role of CALRE in Europe. At the same time, the network would become a tool to start a real European regional policy, enhancing the role of the regional councils. The value of the initiative that the Working Group intends to promote is that by joining forces it is possible to do, in a short time, what would otherwise take years, but first of all you need a good organization.

In addition, this method could facilitate the participation of the Presidents of the legislative assemblies belonging to the Working Group on the proposed initiatives, which in 2012 was very modest, probably due to logistical reasons and not for fading interest in the topics covered. Anyways, we also have to record an increase in requests for membership of the Working Group “Financial Federalism” that in 2012 nearly doubled compared to those recorded in 2011.

3. Members of the Working group

The Working Group “Financial Federalism” is coordinated by the President of the Regional Council of Veneto Clodovaldo Ruffato and is currently made up of the Presidents of the Regional Assembly of the following European Regional Assemblies:

- Parliament of Aland Islands (Finland)
- Legislative Assembly of the Autonomous Region of Madeira (Portugal)
- Parliament of Baden-Württemberg (Germany)
- National Assembly of Wales (United Kingdom)
- Basque Parliament (Spain)
- Parliament of Catalonia (Spain)
- Assembly of the Community of Madrid (Spain)
- Assembly of Murcia (Spain)
- Legislative Assembly of Emilia Romagna (Italy)
- Council of the Autonomous Province of Trento (Italy)
- Parliament of Vorarlberg (Austria)
- Parliament of Tyrol (Austria)
- Parliament of the French Community of Belgium
- Parliament of Saxony (Germany)
- Legislative Assembly of Abruzzo (Italy)
- Parliament of Galicia (Spain)
- Legislative Assembly of Umbria (Italy)
- Parliament of the German-speaking Community of Belgium
- Flemish Parliament (Belgium)
- Parliament of Andalusia (Spain)
- Legislative Assembly of Lombardia (Italy)
- Parliament of the Court of Castilla - La Mancha (Spain)

4. Working methodology

The Working Group is planning to achieve the abovementioned objectives through the following activities:

- **a mapping of MEPs belonging to the regions of CALRE participating in the Working Group;**
- **inform the President of the European Parliament about initiatives and activities of the Working Group, by sending a note signed by the President of the Regional Council of Veneto and the President of CALRE in office;**
- **make and send to the MEPs identified an explanatory document on the purpose of the Working Group and the activities already undertaken and planned in 2013;**
- **update the appropriate section of the website of CALRE through the publication of reports and documents already produced and agenda of the activities of the Working Group;**
- **organize at least two meetings between MEPs identified to facilitate the exchange of opinions and the exchange of ideas;**
- **preparing and presenting a final report at the Plenary assembly in the Autumn of 2013.**

5. Activities calendar 2013

The Working group has the following activity schedule:

- February 26th, 2013 (Brussels): presentation of the working programme;
- June 2013 (Brussels): first meeting between MEPs and Working Group;
- October 2013 (Brussels): second meeting between MEPs and Working Group;
- November 2012 (Brussels): presentation of the annual report to the CALRE's Plenary assembly.