



## **MANIFESTO FOR THE 20<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF CALRE**

The Conference of European Regional Legislative Assemblies (CALRE) was established 20 years ago with the main objective of being an instrument of active participation in the Regional Assemblies and Parliaments with legislative capacity in the European decision-making process. On the occasion of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its Founding Declaration, signed in Oviedo in 1997, we make a positive review of its performance and recognise and acknowledge the important task carried out by all the members and representatives of the different regional assemblies and parliaments that have been working over these two decades to consolidate the institution. We should highlight, in particular, the contributions made during the European Convention on the Future of Europe, and emphasise the request for participation in the subsidiarity and proportionality control mechanism, included in the Treaty of Lisbon; as well as the contributions and reflections of the working groups and the debates generated in the Plenary Assemblies, which not only have helped to disseminate knowledge on issues of common interest, but also to raise awareness on the different, strengthened role played by the CALRE Assemblies in the European Union.

The justification for these 20 years of CALRE is based on the Regional Parliaments and Assemblies' wish to build a modern, efficient Europe through the regions. Once embarked on this task, we discovered common strengths and problems and we learnt from one another. Undoubtedly, the dialogue between CALRE and the European institutions has progressed over these years, during which the essential role of the regional legislative assemblies in the construction of the European Union must be recognised.

However, in this review, we must observe that Europe is going through times of difficulty and uncertainty, which is good reason for this celebration of CALRE to reinforce our commitment to keep following the path of stability, and all the more so since it is based on the founding spirit of the Conference, which is to defend the institutional role of the Regional Legislative Assemblies and Parliaments in the decision-making process of the European Union.

For all these reasons, on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of CALRE, we declare:

- That it is essential to keep strengthening the role of the Regional Legislative Assemblies of the Member States of the European Union to guarantee the necessary involvement of the regions in all fields where binding decisions are adopted and implemented: the territories must be placed at the centre of Community policy.

- Our commitment to keep working, in a coordinated manner, with the European institutions (European Parliament, European Commission, Committee of the Regions and European Council) to consolidate elements such as the principle of subsidiarity and the principle of inter-parliamentary cooperation. The joint participation of regional legislative powers, as well as being necessary, increases the operability and diligence of Community directives, and allows for a more efficient implementation of European legislation.

- The intention to keep offering to the EU institutions the potential of the regional assemblies as the institutions closest to the citizens so as to contribute decisively to the solution of the problems that we face today, since the credibility of our institutions, including the regional parliaments, in the eyes of the citizens, will depend to a great extent on their success in tackling the new challenges facing Europe.

- Our conviction that the regional parliaments can and must be instrumental players to reverse public disaffection with the European institutions. It is possible to change this scenario if the regional parliaments act as public opinion formers and disseminators of the values of Europeanism. We must become a direct bridge between the people and the Community institutions. In this regard, CALRE commits itself to promoting and collaborating actively in think-tanks on the future of Europe in different cities and regions, and to encouraging debates on this issue in Universities and education centres in order to raise awareness among young people of the importance of the European Union in their lives.

- the perspective of an ascending, cooperative, multilevel Europe in which the territories represent their own demands and, as far as possible, adapt them to their own characteristics and needs, so that their policies are sustainable and enjoy the support of their citizens and communities. CALRE and the local and regional communities will be responsible for finding the best way to strengthen the representation of regional and local interests in the European Union.

- the concern -after the publication of the Commission White Paper on the Future of Europe, of which CALRE appreciates the intentions and will to reflect upon the institutional future of the European Union- regarding the content specifically included in "Scenario 4 - More efficiently". In this regard, CALRE wishes to contribute constructively to the debate and not to step backwards from the cohesion policies, which are an essential tool for the development and growth of the territories and the socioeconomic environment of the Regions and Local Authorities of the European Union.

- that the financial consequences of the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union should be solved through the reduction of red-tape and improved efficiency.

- our full support, through a strong recognition of the autonomy of Regional and Local Institutions, to the process of construction of the Europe of the Regions as a *conditio sine qua non* for addressing the global challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and that together we are better prepared to the challenges of our society and meet the demands made by the European people and citizens.

- Our support for the Declaration of Rome, signed by the heads of State and Government of twenty-seven Member States of the European Union and their institutions, last 25 March, when celebrating the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Treaty of Rome. This will require progress towards a stronger and more cohesive Europe, in which the Europeans enjoy the same rights and fulfil the same duties, building up the social pillar, and facilitating wide participation by European citizens in the government of Europe.

- On this point, CALRE believes that the European Social Charter is the guiding principle that governs citizens' rights.

- CALRE reasserts the need to maintain a strong and efficient cohesion policy in all the regions after the year 2020, and to guarantee its full funding.

- the commitment of the European Regional Legislative Assemblies and Parliaments to demand more careful intervention by the European Union, not only in the management of emergencies, but also in the introduction, in fulfilment of their competences, of legislation on the prevention of natural disasters in the regions.

- Concern over events in recent months which have seriously affected our safety such as cyber-attacks and terrorism. Therefore, it is essential to launch a Global Strategy for European Union Foreign Policy and Security which would prevent the impact of these global threats, and would foster the role of Europe as a key player in world governance, not only to achieve an efficient, shared strategy in relations with other countries, but also to help achieve peace in areas of conflict on our planet.

- This last point, together with cooperation policies, are essential to avoid migratory flows entailing humanitarian tragedies like those we are witnessing, still today, in several places in our continent. In the face of the instability in parts of North Africa and the Middle-East which affects Europe due to its proximity, we must insist on the need to build agreements that contribute to growth and stability of these areas, and also to implement a modern border policy, based on control and hospitality as guarantors of our values.

- Support for effective European diplomatic action to prevent illegal immigration and conflicts between countries, while always promoting and demanding respect for the fundamental rights of the migrants.

- the full compliance with the strategic objectives of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda and the commitment of the European Commission to link the 2030 Agenda with the 2020 European Strategy, for example as regards sustainable mobility, waste management in a circular economy and the need for political coherence, integration and a coherent governance framework. CALRE, in agreement with the Committee of the Regions, stresses the point that to achieve sustainable results, it is essential that all the levels of government participate in the decision-making process, in particular the regional and local authorities.

- Commitment to working from the regions to promote technology and innovation, but also the sustainable growth of the EU. We must therefore inform our neighbours in the different territories of the importance of respecting the environment and continuing the climate change strategy, with special attention to reducing the causes and consequences of natural disasters that affect our territory. The objective is to turn our continent into the Europe of smart, sustainable growth, a sustainable, green Europe.

- Commitment to contributing, from the regions, to the achievement of a Union where young people can receive the best education and training in the European Union area, and can study and find a job anywhere in the continent, a Union that would preserve our cultural heritage and promote cultural diversity. The objective must be to construct a common European culture, disseminated not only through European mass media, but also through the mobility of its students, young entrepreneurs and young civil servants in both the public and private sectors; more and better education and knowledge of languages, and to use the instruments that make us part of a common history within diversity: cinema, theatre, literature and art in general, as well as science and new technologies.

- In order to achieve an efficient, safe Europe, we will use CALRE as a forum to strengthen our common interests and work for a Union that guarantees stability and sustainability for the coming generations.

This is the Europe that CALRE has committed itself to construct.

Standing Committee of CALRE

*Brussels, 29 June 2017*