



Consiglio Regionale
del Veneto

CALRE
Working group "Cohesion policies"

Activity Report 2015

Working program 2016

October 2015

1. Introduction

This document describes the activities performed in 2015 by the **Working Group “Cohesion policies”**, coordinated by the Regional Council of the Veneto Region, which was for seven years at the head of the Working group “Financial federalism”.

With regard to the themes and proposals involved, the Working group intends to keep on working on previous initiatives, in line with the documents presented and discussed so far in the framework of the meetings of the Working group “Financial federalism”¹. Nevertheless, it will also deal with the specific topics related to the cohesion policy.

As a consequence, the Regional Council of the Veneto Region reaffirmed that it is committed to analyzing some topics related to the financial federalism given that it is a fundamental lever to build and support the Europe of Regions. In this respect, our effort complies with the goal of widening our analysis in order to include also the topics within our new competences.

In particular, on February 5th it was held in Venice a major conference, organized and hosted by the Regional Council, entitled “*How a federal system can promote growth in Europe: the case of Italy and Germany*”, which saw among its valuable guests Jens Weidmann, President of the Deutsche Bundesbank and Raffaele Cattaneo, new President CALRE. The conference provided an opportunity to analyze, once again, the themes of responsibility and federalism, casting reflection on the part of European strategies to safeguard and strengthen the European Monetary Union.

Today, We hope that the Working Group will continue its work to accomplish, in the first place, the goal to strengthen the role of CALRE within Europe and to initiate actions that serve as an engine to create a real European regional policy, highlighting the fundamental role of the regional councils.

¹ For further information please read the final documents of the Working group “Financial Federalism”, presented between 2008 and 2013 on the occasion of CALRE’s plenary assemblies.

2. Main events

Conference on "How a federal system can promote growth in Europe: the case of Italy and Germany" (Venice, Feb. 5, 2015)

“Studies conducted by economists and analysts have now shown that it is not longer possible to postpone the definition of a strategy to safeguard the European economy recovering above all the competitiveness of most advanced EU regions”: this is one of the key considerations offered at the conference last February.

The traditional view of the Working Group was then re-established at that time, asserting what has already repeatedly argued in the past, namely, that at European level there is no proper policy and support for the leading regions, while the protection of the competitiveness of the most productive must begin with the implementation of fiscal federalism, the only reform that appears to be able to determine a concrete reduction of residual tax, bringing it to an acceptable level and ensuring at the same time, solidarity between the territories.

The basic values on which the European Union is based had been the object of lecture of Jens Wiedmann, President of the Deutsche Bundesbank. His speech at the Venetian workshops touched the sensitive area of the relationship between fiscal policy, monetary policy and the responsibility of the EU countries between each other. Tracing the history of European monetary union since the days of Robert Schuman, the Bundesbank President has emphasized that Europe is above all a union of “shared values, especially in the human rights and democracy”.

Within an europeanist vision, the aspects of monetary union are essential “because they are able to make more stable and rich the whole Union”, but can not be isolated from the overall reforms. Monetary policy and fiscal policy are for the President of the Deutsche Bundesbank elements of a new continental stability and not independent elements. The overall scenario outlined by Weidmann sees then the praise given to the states that launched structural reforms that go in the direction “of a stable system, such as those made in Italy and Spain.”

The conclusion of Jens Weidmann is the synthesis of the German positions repeatedly echoed by Angela Merkel: “Each country needs to take its responsibility and to ensure partners that they have competitive economies and solid public finances. Follow these strict rules is a prerequisite for ensuring that the European Monetary Union is a stable and lasting union.”

3. Future prospects

The working group aims to provide a new input to scheduled events by involving in its actions those who share the European federalist ideals. Therefore, we propose again to:

- share with all the Presidents of CALRE's Regional Assemblies the objectives of the work program and the contact points within the European institutions;
- establish within the working group "Cohesion policies" a network of financial and statistical experts suggested by the CALRE's regions, with the objective of comparing and exchanging data and metadata on the financial flows between levels of government;
- establish a network of MEPs coming from Regions having legislative assemblies in order to involve them in CALRE's themes and push them to work effectively in the European Parliament;
- establish stable relations with the Commissions of the European Parliament, and namely, for the skills that pertain more to the issues of their Working Group, with the following: Budget (BUDGET), Budgetary Control (CON), Economic and Monetary Affairs (ECON), Regional Development (REGI);
- monitor the experiences - already existing in some Regions - aiming at developing and consolidating processes of autonomy, in order to identify their main features, to support them, and to give them visibility among the other Regions;
- organize a study event dedicated to deepen, in terms of enhancement of "Autonomy", the case of Spain, inviting a representative of the institutions, which describes its features, as experienced by the German case;
- organize an event dedicated to deepen the process of harmonization of accounting systems of European countries, assessing whether and how the process goes in the direction of strengthening the autonomy and local governments.

4. Members of the Working group

The “Cohesion policies” working group is coordinated by the President of the Regional Council of Veneto, **Roberto Ciambetti**, and it is currently composed by the Presidents of the following regional assemblies:

- Regional Council of Friuli Venezia Giulia
- Regional Council of Molise
- Piedmont Regional Council
- Regional Council of Umbria
- Regional Council of Basilicata
- Regional Council of Valle d'Aosta
- Landtag Steiermark
- Parliament de Galicia
- Parlement Wallon
- Sachsen