



Consiglio Regionale  
del Veneto



Unioncamere  
Veneto



CALRE  
Working group "Cohesion Policies"

# Activity Report 2016

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## Working program 2017

November 2016

[www.osservatoriofederalismo.eu](http://www.osservatoriofederalismo.eu)



## 1. Introduction

This report provides for a review of the activities carried out over the year 2016 by the **CALRE Working group “Cohesion Policies”**, which is currently in its third year of activity. It operates under the coordination of Veneto Regional Council, which has taken the lead after 7 years of previous experience at the head of the Working group “Financial Federalism”.

For what concerns the issues addressed and the proposals carried out by the working group on cohesion policies, it can be noted that its activities appear to be in line with the path taken in the past; as a matter of fact, a considerable degree of continuity emerges relative to the documentation and materials discussed in previous meetings within the task force on financial federalism. However, the issues related to European cohesion policies are now object of a greater degree of concern from the side of this task force, which was set up with the aim to specifically focus on these topics.

Moreover, the Veneto Regional Council pledged its commitment to pursue a deeper and more comprehensive analysis of all the aspects related to **competitiveness in European Regions**; it also confirmed its willingness to better understand and interpret the contribution of an **efficient public system** to the safeguard the whole economic system. Along with these crucial aspects, the issue of **fiscal deficit** appears to have preserved its strategic importance. In order to find the easier way out from the crisis, it is highly recommended to invest in the European regions with a higher level of efficiency, without depriving them of the resources necessary to steer and sustain the whole economy. As a result of internal discussion, the task force has firmly claimed that the role of the Regions in the definition of European Policies should be strengthened. A widespread consensus has also emerged on the fact that the EU should allocate a larger amount of powers and responsibilities to regional entities, in contrast to the current tendency to consider the central State as preferential partner in the communication from and to Brussels.

In order to strengthen the role of regional and local authorities, it is necessary to take their needs and priorities into due consideration, so to trigger functional synergies between the different levels of governance (*multi-layered governance*). Against this background, it is worth noticing that the CARLE task force put some considerable effort into raising to the level of European Union the discussion on the notable imbalances in between the financial public systems of many Member States. Such imbalances, which exist both at national and regional level in a number of Member States, hamper fair competition within the Single Market as well as they undermine the policy of austerity imposed by the European Union to tackle public expense.

In particular, throughout the year 2016, the following **activities have been carried out**:

1. Venice, 7 July 2016 – Internal Conference, Veneto Regional Council – Presentation of the study on *“Possible economic savings of a government based on differentiated regional autonomies in Italy”*.
2. Venice, 16 September 2016 – CARLE workshop on “Competitiveness in European Regions: efficiency in Public Administration and economic growth”.
3. Update of data and information contained in the Observatory on federalism and public finance ([www.osservatoriofederalismo.eu](http://www.osservatoriofederalismo.eu)).

## 2. Activities

### *Venice, 7 July 2016 – Internal Conference, Veneto Regional Council – Presentation of the study on “Possible economic savings of a government based on differentiated regional autonomies in Italy”.*

On 7 July 2016, the Veneto Regional Council chaired an internal conference in Venice in which the study titled “*Possible economic savings of a government based on differentiated regional autonomies in Italy*” was presented. The aim of the conference was to address more in detail some issues relevant to the activities of the CARLE working group.

The study - carried out within the framework of the Observatory on federalism and public finance - has been presented and discussed at the Ferro Fini Palace by **Roberto Ciambetti**, President of the Veneto Regional Council, together with Giuseppe Fedalto, President of Unioncamere Veneto and Gianangelo Bellati, Secretary General of Unioncamere Veneto. The conference provided for an important focus on discussion regarding the strategies necessary to increase efficiency in the management of public expense, and the cuts of unnecessary expenditures to boost development on the territory. Moreover, this initiative also resulted functional to promote additional meetings with the European representatives of CARLE working group.

The study also offered some interesting imputes to discuss the issue of **differentiated regionalism**. The concept of differentiated regionalism refers to that situation in which a constitutional provision explicitly envisages the possibility for Regions to ask additional legislative competencies to the Central State. This scheme would de facto put in place a “variable geometry” institutional assets. The adoption of differentiated regionalism would represent an extremely important innovation and it would also prospect the Italian regions with interesting opportunities both at institutional and financial level. The objective of this study is to analyze in more in depth the issue of differentiated regionalism in order to better understand the extent of the economic savings associated to this option, as well as possible impacts and implications on the autonomy of regions.

### *Venice, 16 September 2016 – CARLE workshop on “Competitiveness in European Regions: efficiency in Public Administration and economic growth”.*

As a follow up to previous discussions, on 16 September 2016, a seminar was conveyed by the Veneto Regional Council on competitiveness in European Regions, efficiency in Public Administration and economic growth. The following participants figured among the eminent guests who took part to the meeting: **Gian Angelo Bellati**, Secretary General of Unioncamere Veneto; **Loris Di Pietrantonio**, Head of Unit “ESF and FEAD: Policy and Legislation”, European Commission - DG Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion; **Mario Bertolissi**, Professor of Constitutional Law at the University of Padova; **Fabrizio Pezzani**, Professor of Business Economics at Bocconi University.

The workshop provided for a great opportunity to analyze in more detail the issues of responsibility and federalism, directing the discussion towards the topic of European strategies to safeguards and strengthen the European Monetary Union. Moreover, it has been underlined that – in order to get a more comprehensive overview on these issues – it would be necessary to have access to more detailed information, such both regional and local statistic data. To this end, the Veneto Regional Council proved willing to restore the process of data gathering on the extent of financial flows between the intermediate levels of governance in the Public Administration of CARLE Regions. A more efficient data gathering would provide for a more homogeneous and steady monitoring of financial flows at sub-national level, which are not covered in the official statistics.

***Updating of data and information contained in the Observatory on federalism and public finance web site.***

Under the framework of the Regional Observatory on fiscal federalism and public finance, it has been possible to develop – ad steadily monitor – some interesting informative tools, which are now available on the web site [www.osservatoriofederalismo.eu](http://www.osservatoriofederalismo.eu); these tools include:

- a) the **Toolbox** is a report which sets forth an overall framework of comparison between the Italian economic situation and that of other European countries. It provides for a selection of specific economic, financial and societal indicators, respectively organized based on dedicated sections. The information contained in the Toolbox is updated at least three times per year (Usually in February, May and November).
- b) the **Public Finance Barometer**, a report which systematically monitors and updates the structure and evolution of Italian public debt, based on the data released by the Bank of Italy. The barometer consists of four statistical tables containing what follows: 1) data on the public debt disaggregated by instrument and holding sector; 2) data on the volume of government bonds purchased by banks; 3) data on refinancing operations by the Bank of Italy and other banks; 4) data on government bonds due to expire. The updates are published and circulated on a monthly base.
- c) the update of data and information concerning the **Fiscal deficit** of Italian Regions: the fiscal deficit is the overall difference between all the revenues (fiscals and non-fiscal) levied by Public Administrations from a specific territory and the overall spending of that very territory; this approach allows to single out the regions where Public Administrations (understood as an aggregate of State, Regions and local authorities) register a financial surplus or a financial deficit.

**Based on these considerations, we are hopeful that the Working group might continue offering its contribution, on the one hand, to strengthen CALRE's role at European level, and on the other hand, to encourage kick-off actions to create a solid European Regional policy and to enhance the role of the Regional Councils as pivotal actors.**

Today, a **joint action involving all the different actors sharing a common goal** proves to be the most effective way to make sure that **CALRE's action will be increasingly capable to influence** and shape the UE actions with the main boost regional development.

### 3. Future Developments

The Working team is intended to provide for new impulse to the initiatives already planned. In order to do that, the group will encourage the widest possible involvement of people, whose actions are inspired by a European-led regionalist spirit.

Therefore, it is highly recommended to implement the following actions:

- to **share** with all the Presidents of CALRE Regional Assemblies the goals of the program together with the knowledge about how to **enter in contact with the European Institutions**;
- to **create** within the “Cohesion Policies” Working group a **network** of representatives (to be appointed in line with CARLE regions' suggestion) holding a financial and statistical background, with the aim to **compare and exchange data and metadata** on the financial flows between the different levels of government in each Region;
- to create a **network** among the members of the European Parliament elected in those European Regions having their own legislative assemblies, with the aim to involve them in the discussion concerning issues related to the CALRE Cohesion Policies Group and to encourage them to take action within the EU Parliament in a more effective way;
- to establish **stable relations with the Committees** of the European Parliament, and in particular with those committees dealing with issues relevant to the activities of the Working group, i.e. the Budgets Committee (BUDG), the Budgetary Control Committee (CONT), the Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee (ECON), the Regional Development Committee (REGI);
- to **monitor** the gradual and increasing consolidation of the **processes of autonomy** currently taking place in the different regions, with the aim to better understand those processes and detect their key elements. The intention underlying such efforts is to support the autonomy processes, raising their evolution and development to the attention of the other Regions;

- to plan a **workshop** to discuss the state of play in the standardisation of the accounting systems of the EU member States, in order to evaluate whether and to what extent the process is likely to strengthen and support the autonomy of local governments;
- to put forward a more **structured lobbying** to grant the Regions greater powers, both by enhancing the role of local and regional administrations within the European context, and by incentivizing a more effective coordination between all the European regions through a large scale dissemination of our ideas and studies.

#### **4. Members of the Working group**

The Working group on “Cohesion policies” is coordinated by Roberto Ciambetti, President of the Veneto Regional Council, and it is currently composed by the Presidents of the European Regional Assemblies listed below:

1. **Miguel Santalices Vieira** - Parliament of Galicia
2. **Carolina Darias San Sebastián** - Parliament of Canary Islands
3. **Blanca Martín Delgado** - Parliament of Extremadura
4. **Francesco Mollica** - Basilicata Regional Council
5. **Mauro Laus** - Piemonte Regional Council
6. **Franco Iacop** - Friuli Venezia Giulia Regional Council
7. **Matthias Rößler** - Sachsen
8. **Bettina Vollath** - Landtag Steiermark
9. **Antoine André** - Walloon Parliament
10. **Donatella Porzi** - Umbria Regional Council