

## **PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES OF THE CALRE PRESIDENCY 2012**

In 2012 we celebrate the 15th anniversary of the approval of the founding Declaration of Oviedo in 1997. This date may be a good opportunity to reflect on the objectives pursued since its creation, the degree of satisfaction with the achievements and the direction to be followed on the short and long-term.

CALRE was founded with the purpose of going deeper on the participative and democratic principles within the framework of the European Union, defending the values and assumptions of the regional democracy, and strengthening the links among the European and regional Legislative Assemblies, thus meeting the concepts established in the European Outline Convention signed on 21st May 1980 in Madrid on European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities and Authorities.

Furthermore, one of the highest priorities of CALRE since its foundation has been the establishment of transfrontier cooperation relations among its members and the participation in projects of institutional development with other European regions, which even do not belong to the Community territory.

It is also essential not ignoring the importance of the establishment of links with the national and European institutions, and even with other associations that represent the local and regional interests, which are crucial for a greater participation in the process of European integration through a recognised institutional legitimacy.

Moreover, we should not ignore the CALRE commitment to respecting and consolidating the monitoring of the subsidiarity principle by the Community legislation, which contributes to take a step forward on institutional regionalism and multi-level governance.

Thus, the CALRE 2012 Presidency, bearing in mind the objectives in which the Conference is based on, and being these objectives established in its foundational Declaration, will continue working to achieve them, focusing on the following milestones:

- Reinforcing the role of the regions with legislative power within the Community institutions and bodies, and therefore, the institutional legitimacy of these entities at Community level.

- Encouraging citizen participation in the regional European Parliaments following their inherent democratic principles, in order to receive a response from the public powers to the common problems that the citizenship is interested in.
- Implementing the exchange of inter-regional communication in order to favour the union by mutual knowledge, and achieving a greater cohesion among the different territories represented in CALRE.
- Developing participation mechanisms in the monitoring of the subsidiarity principle – particularly the EWS- in order to participate in the drafting and development of Community law by regional entities, following the philosophy established in the Treaty of Lisbon.

Following the work carried out by the former Presidency, in order to achieve the above-mentioned objectives, and as they have been established in the Declaration approved in L'Aquila on 25th and 26 November 2011, CALRE 2012 Presidency aims at the following:

### **Strengthening links among the CALRE members**

15 years after the foundation of CALRE, it is the time to reflect on **the objectives pursued since its creation and the degree of satisfaction with the achievements**, and to think on the direction to be followed in the future.

Consequently, for the purpose of the growth of a European culture, it is necessary to **reinforce the co-operation among the CALRE members** in order to increase their mutual knowledge, to favour the exchange of experiences, to promote collaboration projects and to develop strategies for regional entities.

Thus, while respecting the autonomy of every Parliament, CALRE believes it is necessary a greater implication of their bodies with the beginning of a **feedback process**. In this process, several different and internal data should be exchanged for improving the relationships among their members and for facilitating their mutual contact. In this manner, CALRE will go for transparency and trust in public offices, by uploading their results in the CALRE web page and by creating a European legislative database in order to promote the exchange of information on the starting and final stages of the European legislative process, which all the parliamentary institutions and the general public can reach.

Finally, for the purpose of strengthening the links among the CALRE members, the importance of the activities carried out by the **working groups** should be highlighted. Among the working groups we find those already established and extended on Subsidiarity, E-Democracy, Financial Federalism, Regional Democracy and Rural and Urban Areas, as well as the working group that has been created after its approval on the plenary session in L'Aquila on Equality and Equal Gender Opportunities and Regional Democracy. The results obtained from their work contribute to the joint reflection on matters of essential interest for the regions and to the establishment of a common and integrated position on them before the European institutions.

### **Continuing and extending the relationships between the CALRE and the EU institutions**

CALRE 2012 Presidency, following the path started by the outgoing Presidency, aims at the strengthening of links with the European institutions, as an essential instrument for achieving a greater institutional legitimacy of the regions associated with the CALRE, in order to be recognised as official negotiators in the democratic governance system of the Union.

The **Committee of the Regions** will still be the main negotiator for CALRE, which will also promote the participation of their members in the Subsidiarity Monitoring Network and the creation of the REGPEX database for its implementation this year.

In the same way, CALRE, together with the CoR will implement a project that will allow the coordination among regional parliamentary bodies with competence for European matters for their reinforcement of its implication in the analysis of European policies and in the defence of the principle of subsidiarity. This aim was already established in the CALRE Declaration of Oviedo in 1997.

Furthermore, CALRE expresses its wish of maintaining and reinforcing the initiative promoted by the CoR that has the aim that the Presidents of the European associations would meet the President of the **European Commission** for discussing regional matters, keeping, on the other hand, its participation in the structured dialogs that the mentioned Community institution organizes.

However, if there is an institution which CALRE wishes to reinforce its links with is, without a doubt, the **European Parliament**, the European institution of democratic representation. Since its foundation in this level CALRE aims at strengthening the collaboration with COSAC, for the exchange of experiences in the inter-parliamentary coordination and the participation in the EWS of the national and regional Parliaments, by creating a network similar to IPEX.

## **Implementing links with other regional associations**

CALRE highlights the need of cooperating more tightly with other European regional associations in common interest areas, considering particularly beneficial the collaboration started with **REGLEG** with which this year we will collaborate in the organisation of the International Conference “Regions with legislative power in Europe – future challenges and strategic goals” that will be held in Innsbruck in June 2012, where the Congress and the CIVEX Commission of the CoR will also participate.

Also, the links established with the **Congress** will also contribute to the development of the project “Twin a region” and the participation in the fulfilment of the questionnaires referred to the self-assessment resources for regional Parliaments.

As it was previously stated, the implementation of cooperation relations with **COSAC** will be useful for CALRE and its objectives, and already since its foundation the possibility of CALRE being represented in COSAC, and even the creation of a sort of COSAC at regional level, was favourably studied.

## **Establishing links with other institutions and regions that are not member of CALRE**

The interregional and transnational dialog with other European regions that do not belong to the EU leads to a better social and cultural wealth of all the implied agents, completed by the promotion of an institutional model that contributes to the building of a more effective regional democracy and that can only have positive consequences for all the involved entities.

Furthermore, CALRE will try to establish relations with **UNDESA**, a United Nations agency for economic and social matters, and the promotion of new IT and communication services through the participation of the Parliaments in the **ICT platform**.

## **Developing mechanisms that involve the regional authorities in the political process of the EU**

The Treaty of Lisbon was another step forward towards the institutional regionalism in the Community framework due to the fact that it considered the EU’s commitment to respect the national identities of the Member States, also regarding the local and regional autonomy.

Thus, the principle of subsidiarity and the EWS that monitors its implementation mean the creation of a new responsibility model and multi-level governance that make it possible that the Community decisions are made based on the proximity degree with the territorial communities and their citizens.

CALRE supports the contribution that the regional system can make both at European and national level and thus emphasizes the need that UE regional Legislative Assemblies should participate and get involved in EWS, together with national Parliaments. Even a systematic participation of the Regional Assemblies with legislative powers in this monitoring mechanism of the principle of subsidiarity could be proposed, making a call on the European Commission, given how usefulness its remarks and hints can be.

Furthermore, CALRE considers the Subsidiarity Monitoring Network of the Committee of the Regions is an efficient tool for the promotion of exchange of information among the regional entities in the monitoring procedure of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality.

### **Deepening in the mechanisms that promote the participation of the citizenship in parliamentary institutions**

The parliamentary institutions should foster their knowledge among the citizens and promote participation channels in their activity, involving them in the European integration in a proactive manner.

The Treaty of Lisbon introduces a new way of public participation in the elaboration of policies in the European Union: the European citizens' initiative. As it is requested in the Treaty, the European Parliament and the Council, at the European Commission's proposal, have taken a Regulation that establishes the rules and procedures that regulate this new instrument (Regulation (EU) No 211/2011 of the European Parliament and the Council, on 16th February 2011, on European citizens' initiative).

In accordance with the Regulation, it will be possible to start to propose citizen's initiatives from 1st April 2012. This is the reason why CALRE could get involved in this initiative's promotion as the institution closest to citizens.

### **Dynamic and modern layout for the CALRE Web site**

CALRE considers it is necessary to have its own web page and a computing network that should be open to all the involved institutions and all the citizens, and that should allow an immediate data and procedures enquiry in every Parliament, including the social networks which are so present nowadays.