



Galicia DECLARATION

CALRE 2014

Santiago de Compostela, 8th November 2014

Introduction:

The CALRE was founded in Oviedo on 7 October 1997 with the aim of providing the regional parliaments with a more influential role in the European legislative process.

As key elements for its development, the CALRE took into account the European Parliament's relations with regional parliaments, the role of regional parliaments in EU policies and the principle of subsidiarity.

The European Parliament has a representative role in the European legislative process, thus it is a co-legislator with the European Union Council, and the European policies interfere, increasingly, in the field of the regional parliaments' competences.

The principle of subsidiarity, as specified in Article 5 of the Treaty on European Union, is the guiding principle for defending a proximity in governance within the European Union and it is responsible for ensuring that the decisions



taken in Europe are made as efficiently as possible at the closest level to the citizens, addressing their real needs, and tailored to the specificities of the territory.

One.- The legitimacy of European integration.

The CALRE, an organisation of European regional legislative assemblies, is endowed with democratic legitimacy, thus it directly represents its citizens at a European level.

In particular, the CALRE intends to go further in the current European integration process, aiming to provide increased democratic legitimacy.

The economic crisis affecting the European Union in recent years has given rise to certain doubts regarding its democratic legitimacy; this was reflected in the lower rates of participation in the European elections. The lack of confidence affecting Europe, from part of European citizens, constitutes the indisputable need to include the regional parliaments into its legitimacy recovery process, since these form part of the European parliamentary system, and one of the tasks thereof is to bring citizens closer to Europe and Europe closer to its citizens, as staunch allies for the building of an European awareness.

These decisions on strengthening democratic legitimacy should be based on the search among all European entities for the basic ideas of consensus upon which to confirm



Common inclusive project, in which the EU institutions work hand in hand with citizens as a whole.

From the perspective of our regions, regional parliaments with legislative powers are key players in promoting good governance and in citizens' involvement in the democratic process, aiming to improve local and regional democracy and the defence of Human Rights.

The development of good governance, a higher quality legislative framework benefiting the citizens, is our responsibility as well as, of course, the defence of our citizens' rights.

Two.- The specific challenges of the regional parliaments in the new mandate of the European Union

1. General features.

The CALRE shows its concerns on current geopolitical difficulties and calls for the negotiation and the implementation of international law mechanisms to resolve conflicts in Europe and beyond.

Our organisation has been, and remains, highly sensitive to global challenges which affect the international community, and aims to be heard, through existing institutional channels, with regard to different matters, such as sustainable development within the European Union to improve citizens'



quality of life. With this in mind, the EU has strategically included sustainable development as a priority in a broad range of policies. In particular, the EU has assumed a leading role in the fight against climate change as well as in the promotion of a low carbon economy.

On the other hand, the major conflicts emerging within the European Union owing to the financial tensions resulting from the crisis of recent years, has led the CALRE to vigorously convey its support for the member States' policies in the fight against corruption and the promotion of institutional transparency. With this aim, the CALRE has fostered, and is currently encouraging, the use of the new Information & Communication technologies (ICTs) to develop e-democracy systems, to ensure efficient, transparent governance at the service of the citizens.

The CALRE believes that regional parliaments with legislative powers need to participate both *ex ante* and *ex post* in budgetary stability studies on the economic measures to be taken, from a perspective of evaluating the social and territorial, and not strictly macroeconomic, impact of the structural decisions adopted by EU institutions. In particular the need to provide a clear role for regional and local authorities in the European semester procedure and in the monitoring of the Europe 2020 strategy is highlighted, given the need to coordinate and implement actions at all government levels.



EU regional parliaments with legislative powers have to be taken into account as a democratic safeguard. As directly elected bodies, they embody before all public powers the strengthening of fundamental rights and the consolidation of a democratic culture. As direct and immediate representatives of the citizens, regional parliamentary houses are privileged interlocutors for ensuring that the development of EU legislation is respectful of the principles of EU law: notably, the right of non-discrimination, as well as other more recent ones which affect the challenges arising from personal data treatment, cross border crime and terrorism.

The works undertaken by the CALRE have also shown that European regions and their parliaments are essential points of reference in the EU's immigration policy. Despite the fact that, at EU level, immigration policy is a state competence, it is a matter that has a direct bearing on the development of regional and local government, particularly in the areas of social inclusion and the protection of fundamental rights of those living in the common space of Rights and Freedoms, which has always been Europe. Hence, the CALRE parliaments must be heard in the development of the common policy on immigration as well as in the implementation of the Smart border legislative package for border control currently being drafted by the European Union.

2. The decisive and strategic challenges for the future of the European Union: policies for growth, for young people and jobs, for equal opportunity and gender equality.

CALRE believes that the most important challenge for the EU in the near future is to be able to generate growth, employment and cohesion.

CALRE is concerned about the critical situation which persists in Europe. With over twenty-six million unemployed and a quarter of the population at risk of poverty and social exclusion, the European Union must adopt policies and use suitable tools to return to acceptable growth rates. It is therefore necessary that in this process the regional parliaments should participate in the construction and definition of policies for cohesion, growth and development, paying particular attention to the issue of jobs, especially for young people.

CALRE calls for a strengthening of measures to allow positive development and recovery in the European Union also with view of ongoing social inequality in the countries of the European Union. Moreover, CALRE calls for an effective use of the EU funds during the 2014-2020 programming.

CALRE expresses its concern at the current situation faced by young people in Europe and states the need to improve their educational skills and vocational training. The initiative for

youth employment and the adoption of a Youth Guarantee within the European Union must ensure that young Europeans have access to quality jobs, education and ongoing training so as to fight youth unemployment and improve the transition from school to work. Regional parliaments should participate in the planning and monitoring of these EU policies.

The Parliaments of CALRE defend the implementation of the 2010-2015 European Strategy for equality between women and men. We believe in the priorities set out in the Charter for Women, being convinced that the EU's external action in this field will enable the development of democratic and inclusive societies. These priorities are based on the implementation of:

- a) **Economic independence**, which should be achieved especially by combating discrimination, stereotypes in education, segregation in the labour market, precarious employment, involuntary part-time work and the asymmetries in family responsibilities between men and women.
- b) **Equal pay for men and women**
- c) **Representation of women in decision-making and leadership roles**, fields in which women are still under-represented in both the public and private sectors.
- d) **Respect for the dignity and integrity of women and eradication of gender-based violence**, including those



traditions that humiliate women which undermine human rights.

Regional parliaments want and need to participate in the planning phase and the setting of the relevant policy priorities and intend to work with synergy in their monitoring and evaluation.

Three.- Institutional dynamics in the European integration process. Regional parliaments in the European Union.

The European Commission has acknowledged the importance of its relations with national parliaments as a way of bringing the Union closer to its citizens. This target is highly commendable; nonetheless, for an adequate implementation of the subsidiarity principle - guarantee for an efficient implementation of EU legislative initiatives on its territory- it needs to take into account regional parliaments with legislative powers if the targets are to be achieved effectively.

In this context, it is important to ensure that the regional assemblies with legislative powers can work at a European level in strengthening the monitoring and analysis of the subsidiarity principle by the EU institutions as well as to explore possibilities for a better and more effective involvement in other processes at EU-level. As a guarantee of this principle, the CALRE has to maintain a close institutional relationship at European level which will enable it



to defend the idea of Europe, hear the sub-state level entities in the EU legislative and thus endow the EU with greater democratic legitimacy. CALRE therefor welcomes the proposal of the chairs from 29 European Affairs Committees to set up a working group with the European Commission to develop a common action plan and asks for an appropriate involvement of regional parliaments with legislative powers in the whole process.

On an EU level, the work of the CALRE and its members fosters regional inter-parliamentarianism at a supranational level, encouraging the interchange of information and best practices. Networking also boosts their representativeness at European level, giving them a greater presence in the European institutions, particularly in the Committee of the Regions, the representative body for the EU's regional and local authorities, to encourage higher rates of citizen participation and strengthen the quality of democracy in the European integration project.

Multilevel governance requires the European institutions, the member States and the regional and local entities to cooperate in a functional, institutionalised manner in both the development and implementation of EU policies.

The regional parliaments and the CALRE are once again the level closest to the citizens and thus, the one most effective in seeking political solutions which address the citizens' real needs. For this for this reason, CALRE promotes through



regional parliaments a more detailed information of EU policies towards citizens also to make them more involved in the European legislative process.

The main goal is to attain greater legislative efficiency under principle of subsidiarity and proportionality. To this end, innovative models based on efficient cooperation at all government levels, from the top government level to the lowest government level (“Top down” approach), need to be developed transparently and democratically.

As the European Commission acknowledged at the beginning of the 2014 mandate, the classification of policy priorities as a basis for a better Union with clearer objectives will only work if it comes from a partnership approach between the European institutions and the member States. Here, the role of the CALRE can once again be regarded as irreplaceable, since all EU member States that have regional parliaments with legislative powers recognise them as essential components for setting the political agenda and, therefore, as essential partners in the development of the European project.

On this point, CALRE must benefit from the various experiences in Europe of relations between national parliaments and the European Legislative Assemblies in the matter of participation in the setting of European policies, in order to achieve a common platform and share those best practices that are useful in supporting the activities of the



regional parliaments: these may have different institutional weights but are of equal importance.

CALRE therefore will further strengthen and encourage political dialogue with the European Parliament, ensuring it is heard by the European Commission through involvement in the pre-legislation phases and, in particular, will intensify its cooperation with the Committee of the Regions which, along with CALRE itself, in direct dialogue with European institutions, can present strong, credible and effective positions for a true European regional policy.

Fourth.- European Strategies and the Future of Europe

In particular, this year saw the approval of the EU multiannual financial framework for the 2014-2020 period, which defines spending priorities aimed at sustainable development, employment and competitiveness, in line with the EU growth strategy “Europe 2020”.

In order to strengthen the prospects for recovery in growth and employment, CALRE sees in the mid-term review of the Europe 2020 Strategy an important opportunity that should not be missed for rethinking the current governance and to correct its defects in forecasting and goals in order to strengthen the potential of the cohesion policy by increasing and broadening the political and financial benefits of European integration (and consequently its sustainability) for all Member States without distinction.



Since this is a financial programme in which every seven years the EU develops its economic policies, the CALRE is particularly aware of its role regarding the interim review of the multiannual financial framework scheduled for the end of 2016. Respecting the setting of stability and growth, the European regions seek to permit the adjustments required in this document so that the application thereof can be adapted to the specific needs of the citizen of the different regions of the European Union.

Furthermore, the Europe 2020 interim review highlights the importance of multilevel governance. Europe 2020 is the EU's growth strategy for the next decade and it is principally aimed at transforming the EU into a smart, sustainable and inclusive community. The review stresses the lack of territorial dimension of the strategy for attaining the targets set. In conclusion, there is a need to coordinate and implement different actions at all government levels, including local and regional authorities, to obtain a successful strategy and implement good governance in Europe.

Five.- Boosting the CALRE.

The CALRE's future role must adhere to several lines of work. On one hand, strengthening its involvement in monitoring the subsidiarity principle based on the recognised importance of regional parliaments with legislative powers as well as their increasing engagement in the work of the



Committee of the Regions, as an institution representative of local and regional authorities at a European level. This demand is also stressed in the European Commission's sixth report on territorial, social and economic cohesion.

As an association of parliaments, the CALRE can at no time neglect the essential role it plays in strengthening the democracy of the European integration project.

The EU has described democracy also as an ongoing process, "developing from within, involving all sections of society and a range of institutions that should ensure participation, representation, responsiveness and accountability. The task of building and sustaining a culture of Foreword human rights and making democracy work for its citizens, though especially urgent and difficult in emerging democracies, is in fact a never-ending challenge, belonging first and foremost to the people of the country concerned".

In this regard, CALRE calls for a strengthening of relations with the European Parliament, which in recent times has played a strong role as a defender of the consolidation of parliamentary systems around the world. Furthermore, CALRE calls for a strengthening of collaboration with national parliaments, including through dialogue with COSAC, the Conference of the Committees of EU National Parliaments Dealing with European Affairs. CALRE is convinced that the exchange of information and best practices among the parliaments at different levels - European, national and



regional - will help to promote and enhance their functions within each country as well as the global spread of democratic values.

The CALRE's experience as a forum for increased common knowledge and the exchange of best practices has served to integrate different parliamentary traditions in respect of different cultures and national histories.

CALRE aims, to a larger extent than today, to use its cooperation and strength to affect issues of great importance to the European regional legislative assemblies and to support each other.

Sixth.- Saint James' Way in the European integration process.

Saint James' Way, the first European Cultural Itinerary, is one of the greatest treasures common to all Europeans. Cultural and Moral heritage of the Western Europe and of all humanity, this ancient route has been travelled by millions of people since the Middle Ages. At the time, the first pilgrims were unaware that, by exchanging languages, music, arts, news and ideas, both among themselves and with the indigenous peoples of St. James' way, they were laying the foundations for a European identity, whose first sample was forged in a common conception of art that can still be recognised in many churches and cathedrals all over Europe. In the tenth century the pilgrimage to Compostela was a consolidated fact in the Christian world, one which,



carried out over the centuries, has now attained a new level of splendour that transcends of its merely religious significance.

The path of dialogue, harmony and mutual understanding which form the basis of the Pilgrim's Way, are also at the core of parliamentary interchange and of the ongoing negotiation entailed by the EU integration process.