

Minutes of the meeting of CALRE Standing Committee 24th November 2011 – L’Aquila

The CALRE Standing Committee met in L’Aquila, at the venue of Abruzzo Regional Council, on November 24th 2011, in order to discuss the following

Operative agenda:

1. Approval of the minutes of the Standing Committee held in Santa Cruz de Tenerife on September 16th 2011
2. President Pagano’s communication
3. Urgent amendments to CALRE final declaration
4. Proposal of the President of the Flemish legislative Assembly, Jan Peumans, concerning an informative initiative aiming at furthering mutual knowledge among CALRE Legislative Assemblies on their institutional organization.
5. Amendments to CALRE Rules
6. Candidates for 2012 CALRE Presidency
7. Organization of the 2011 CALRE Plenary Assembly
8. Duration of speeches and time for debate
9. Further details for the organization of CALRE Plenary Assembly

Participants:

- **Nazario Pagano**, President of Abruzzo Regional Council and President of CALRE;
- **David Melding**, Vice-President of the National Assembly for Wales;
- **Pilar Rojo Noguera**, President of Galicia Legislative Assembly;
- **Jan Peumans**, President of the Flemish Parliament;
- **Hans Penz**, President of Niederosterreich Legislative Assembly ;
- **Davide Boni**, President of Lombardy Legislative Assembly;
- **Guido Wolf**, President of Baden-Württemberg Legislative Assembly;
- **Clodovaldo Ruffato**, President of Veneto Regional Council and coordinator of the working group on financial federalism;
- **Fernando Jesús Manzano Pedrera**, President of Extremadura Legislative Assembly and coordinator of the working group on the balance between rural and urban areas.
- **Montserrat Auzmendi del Solar**, delegated by **Arantza Quiroga**, President of the Legislative Assembly of Basque Countries and coordinator of the working group on *e-democracy*

CALRE Secretary General, Ms. Giovanna Colangelo, attended the meeting

The meeting began at 18:15.

At the beginning of the meeting, President **Pagano** welcomed and thanked the Presidents for their participation. He recalled the terrible earthquake that hit L'Aquila in 2009 and its serious consequences on the city and its population.

Point 1 of the operative agenda: approval of the minutes of the Standing Committee held in Santa Cruz de Tenerife on September 16th 2011.

According to art. 10 of CALRE Rules, the President delivered the minutes of the Standing Committee held in Santa Cruz de Tenerife on September 16th, which was approved unanimously.

Point 2 of the operative agenda: President Pagano's communication

President **Pagano** summarized the content of the draft Declaration of L'Aquila, subject of discussion of the Plenary Assembly. He remarked the integration of the text with the contributions sent by the legislative Assemblies of Galicia, Asturias, Basque Countries, Flanders, Lower Austria, Catalonia, and Bavaria and by the Conference of Italian Regions and Autonomous Provinces' Legislative Assemblies. Moreover, he underlined the suppression of the paragraph dedicated to the self-assessment of Regional Parliaments, subject of two amendments of Galicia and Lower Austria Legislative Assemblies. As Pagano remarked, the issue would have been the subject of an autonomous working document, discussed by the Plenary Assembly. Then, President Pagano analysed the amendment proposals, which were not inserted in the text, either because they were unclear or because they suppressed other Presidents' proposals. He recalled that the Plenary Assembly would have taken the final decision on their integration in the text. Specifically:

- the proposal sent by the Legislative Assembly of Basque Countries to modify the last paragraph of Declaration, as follows: *“They ask for a bolder (instead of “more incisive”) role of in designing European policies and strategies in those areas, which fall within their competences”*.
- the proposal sent by Bavaria Legislative Assembly, aiming at modifying the paragraph proposed by President Boni in the section “Enhancing relations among regional legislative assemblies” as follows: *“Taking for granted the respect of the autonomy of each Parliament, it is desirable CALRE open itself to a deeper involvement of its Parliaments members’ internal structures, such as the Commissions for European Affairs, (removing the expression “into its activities”) and create a European legislative database to exchange information on the initial and final phase of the European legislation”*.
- the proposal sent by Bavaria Legislative Assembly to remove the paragraph of the section “Enhancing relations among Regional Legislative Assembly”, containing the contribution of the Flemish Legislative Assembly:
“CALRE desires all the initiatives facilitating the exchange of information and data related to several issues (such as social-economic data, or data related to the participation of women in political activities and, therefore, to the quality of regional democracy) be fostered and implemented. In order to enhance relations between parliament and facilitate mutual contacts CALRE will exchange further data and information about the composition, budget and internal structure of its members. These data will be accessible for the parliaments and the public and will be published on the website of CALRE”.

Point 3 of the operative agenda: Urgent amendments to CALRE Declarations.

President **Pagano** recalled art. 16 of CALRE Rules, concerning the procedure to submit and vote on urgent amendments to the final Declaration. Then he presented the urgent amendment proposal sent by Ms. Isabella Rauti, representative of Latium Regional Council. Her proposal related to the theme of gender representation within Regional legislative Assemblies and provided for the creation of a forum and a platform of proposals in order to tackle this emergency.

The President of Lower Austria Legislative Assembly, **Hans Penz**, did not recognize the urgency of the amendment and proposes its rejection.

The President of Galicia Legislative Assembly, **Pilar Rojo Noguera**, thanked President Pagano for integrating the contributions sent by Galician Legislative Assembly in the text, and proposed to discuss the proposal sent by Ms. Rauti the day after, during the Plenary Assembly, in order to give the participating delegations time enough to examine the issue more carefully.

President **Pagano** proposed the Standing Committee not to decide on the amendment and postpone its discussion the day after during the Plenary Assembly. Finally, he asked the participants of the Standing Committee to explain their colleagues from the same country of origin the urgent amendment proposal's content.

The majority of the CALRE Standing Committee participants, with the abstention of the Austrian representative, Hans Penz, accepted President Pagano's proposal.

Finally, President **Pagano** summarized the projects examined by the previous Standing Committee, which would have been discussed by the Plenary Assembly the day after. Specifically:

- The project on the self-assessment of Regional Parliaments, aiming at strengthening regional democracy, through submitting a series of questionnaires concerning the representativeness of Regional legislative Assemblies, the degree of their control on Regional Governments, the degree of their transparency, accessibility, accountability and of their participation to European and international politics.
- The project "Twin a Region" which aims at promoting the dialogue among EU Regional legislative Assemblies and those regions, within and outside the European Union, with a different institutional organization. With the collaboration of the Congress of local and regional authorities, the project provides for a meeting to be held in Strasbourg, at the venue of the Congress, which could pave the way to develop forms of inter regional cooperation;
- The project proposed by Lombardy regional Council, concerning the creation of a coordination of the Presidents of Regional Legislative Assemblies' Commissions competent for European Affaires, with the technical and logistical support of the Committee of the Regions.

Point 4 of the operative agenda: proposal launched by the President of Flemish Parliament, Jan Peumans, concerning an informative initiative aiming at furthering Regional legislative Assemblies' mutual knowledge on their institutional organization.

President **Pagano** presented the proposal launched by the President of the Flemish Parliament, Jan Peumans, consisting in submitting EU Regional legislative Assemblies a specific questionnaire, concerning their institutional organization. Once filled in, the questionnaires will be published on CALRE institutional website.

The CALRE Standing Committee accepted President Peumans' proposal unanimously.

Point 5 of the operative agenda: amendments to CALRE Rules.

President **Pagano** recalled the Standing Committee meeting in Brussels on February 23rd had decided to introduce, after the first paragraph of art. 11 of CALRE Rules, under the heading "The Vice-President", the following 1.bis paragraph: " The Vice-President whose mandate as regional President expires for any reason is replaced by his successor in the Legislative Assembly of origin". The amendment proposal aimed at regulating the appointment procedure of the CALRE Vice-President, when the outgoing president ceases to hold office in the regional legislative Assembly of origin. President Pagano recalled article 12 of CALRE Rules, concerning the composition of the Standing Committee, according to which: "The Standing Committee is formed by the President of the Conference, the Vice President, one President per State, one delegation per member state and the chairmen of the working groups". Then, he explained his amendment proposal. During the meeting held in Santiago de Compostela on June 24th 2011, the Standing Committee decided to remove the words "a delegation per members State", as they seemed to be a repetition of one President of a Regional Legislative Assembly per State. Moreover, President Pagano proposed to amend art.12 of CALRE Rules, by recognizing the possibility for the President of the Regional Legislative Assembly unable to attend one or more sessions of the Standing Committee to delegate someone else on his/her behalf. The amendment proposal – Pagano explained – aimed at reconciling the need to recognize the Presidents of the Regional legislative Assemblies as legitimate members of CALRE Standing Committee with the need to facilitate the participation of those Regional Parliaments (from Portugal, United Kingdom and Finland), representing States with few Regions endowed with Legislative Assemblies within the Standing committee.

President **Pagano** read the amendment proposal of art. 12, as follows:

- 1. The Standing Committee is formed by the President of the present Conference, the Vice President, one President per State and the Chairmen of the working groups.*
- 2. Each Member State is responsible for nominating their representatives to the Standing Committee and informs CALRE promptly on an annual basis. In those States in which the number of regional legislative Assemblies is less than or equal to three, the designated President may delegate another member of the Regional Legislative Assembly of origin or a component of another regional Legislative Assembly of the same State. "*

After recalling that, in case of rejection, only the amendment to the first paragraph of art. 12, approved by the Standing Committee held in Santiago de Compostela, would be submitted to the vote of the Plenary Assembly, **Pagano** submitted his amendment proposal to the vote of the CALRE Standing Committee. His amendment proposal was accepted unanimously.

Point 6 of the operative agenda: candidacy to 2012 CALRE Presidency.

President **Pagano** recalled that, under art. 8 of CALRE Rules, the candidacies to CALRE Presidency had to be submitted by the last meeting of the Standing Committee, with a written request, containing a political agenda and a calendar of activities. As anticipated by the President of Galician Parliament, Pilar Rojo Noguera, Pagano informed the participants of CALRE Standing Committee that the President of the Parliament of Extramadura, F. Manzano, intended to run for the 2012 CALRE Presidency. After recalling the availability of the Presidents of Wales National Assembly and Baden-Württemberg Parliament to host the meetings of CALRE Standing Committee in 2012, President Pagano left the floor to Pilar Rojo Noguera.

The President of the Galician Parliament, **Pilar Rojo Noguera**, thanked President Pagano on behalf of Spanish Regional Legislative Assemblies and left the floor to the candidate to CALRE Presidency: Fernando Manzano, President of the Regional Legislative Assembly of Extremadura.

After recalling the serious consequences the 2009 earthquake had on L'Aquila, President **Manzano** congratulated with President Pagano and the members of the Standing Committee for the excellent work done in 2011. He thanked the Spanish Presidents, and particularly President Noguera, for having supported his candidacy, since it gave his region, Extremadura, a meaningful chance of visibility: Extremadura has 1.100.000 inhabitants, it is a little border and mostly rural Region. President Manzano ensured the participants of the CALRE Standing Committee that, in case of election, he would have committed himself to follow the good work CALRE did in 2011 and would have taken into consideration the proposals coming from Wales and Baden-Württemberg.

Point 7 of the operative agenda: organization of the Plenary Assembly

President **Pagano** recalled the programme of CALRE Plenary Assembly briefly. The CALRE Plenary Assembly will last two days: on the 25th November, its participants will approve the minutes of the 2010 CALRE Plenary Session, discuss and vote the amendments to CALRE Rules, discuss the draft Declaration of L'Aquila and the amendments proposed. During the second day, they will approve the Declaration of L'Aquila, vote for the 2012 CALRE working groups and the 2012 CALRE Presidency.

Point 8 of the operative agenda: duration of speeches and time for discussion.

Making reference to art. 13 of CALRE Rules, concerning the maximum duration of speeches and the time for discussion, President **Pagano** proposed at most 5 minutes for speeches and 10 minutes for discussion.

The Standing Committee decided unanimously to dedicate at most 5 minutes for speeches and 7 minutes for discussion.

Point 9 of the operative agenda: further organizational details for the Plenary Assembly.

President **Pagano** recalled how important the working groups' activities are for CALRE. He underlined the proposal of Extremadura legislative Assembly to carry on the activity of the working group on the balance between rural and urban areas, assigning their coordination to another President. He left the floor to the other participants of the Standing Committee.

The President of Veneto Regional Council and the coordinator of the working group on financial federalism, **Clodovaldo Ruffato**, expressed its intention to carry on the activities of the working group and to maintain its coordination.

The President of Baden Württemberg Legislative Assembly, **Guido Wolf**, expressed his interest in the activities of the working group dedicated to "Regional democracy-Regional institutional models".

At the end of the meeting, **Pagano** thanked the members of CALRE Standing Committee for the great support given to his Presidency. He invited the guests to the welcome dinner in Santo Stefano di Sessanio.

The President of the Flemish Legislative Assembly, Jan **Peumans**, thanked President Pagano for his ospitality. After recalling the extraordinary experience of being member of the CALRE Standing Committee and the opportunity President Pagano gave him during his mandate to know a southern region – Abruzzo, he informed the members of the CALRE Standing Committee that, with the end of 2011, he wouldn't keep on representing Belgian Regions within CALRE Standing Committee for 2012.

The meeting ended at 19,00.

The President of CALRE
Nazario Pagano
(President of Abruzzo Regional Council)