

CALRE's Standing Committee met in Madeira, Portugal at the Madeira Congress Centre on 17th April 2010 to discuss the following items on the agenda:

1. Report of the President;
2. Approval of the minutes of the Standing Committee meeting held in Brussels on 25th January 2010;
3. Status of the CALRE – RegLeg agreements;
4. Amendments to the CALRE organizational rules;
5. Discussion on the CALRE legal framework;
6. Discussion for the Presidency 2011;
7. CALRE 2010 Declaration. On what European debate issues should the association focus its attention?
8. 2011 Working Groups;
9. Any other business.

Participants: Giovanni Kessler, President of the Council of the Autonomous Province of Trento
José Miguel Jardim d'Oliveira Mendonça, President of the Legislative Assembly of the Autonomous Region of Madeira
Peter Straub, President of the Landtag of Baden-Württemberg
Herwig van Staa, President of the Regional Parliament of Tyrol
Alberto Cerise, President of the Regional Council of Valle D'Aosta
Monica Donini substituting for the President of the Regional Council of Emilia Romagna
Jorge Costa Pereira, Vice-President of the Legislative Assembly of the Autonomous Region of the Azores
Arantza Quiroga Cía, President of the Basque Parliament

Presiding Officer: President Kessler in his capacity as President

Assistants: Dr. Giorgia Loss, CALRE Secretary General, and Dr. Tommaso Leonardi, CALRE Director.

The meeting started at 10.15 a.m.

Josè Miguel Jardim d'Oliveira Mendonça, President of the Legislative Assembly of the Autonomous Region of Madeira, gave a brief welcome speech.

After having thanked President Mendonça for his hospitality, President Kessler introduced point 2 of the agenda.

Point 2 of the agenda:

- approval of the minutes of the 25th January Standing Committee Meeting in Brussels

President Kessler reminded the assembly that the minutes of the Standing Committee's last meeting held in Brussels on 25th January this year was published on the CALRE site in all the languages pursuant to the regulations of the Association. The absence of observations implied the approval of the published text.

Point 1 of the agenda: report of the President

Further to the CALRE site, President Kessler informed the assembly that the web forum is now in function and that the password had been sent to all the members. He specified that as of then a dialogue window was opened to gather possible observations in preparing the “Declaration 2010” draft. He mentioned his intention to periodically make use of the newsletter. He also made known that the meeting with the President of the European Commission would soon be held, in view of which some topics were highlighted for discussion, among general issues and others dealing with more specific matters. He further underlined that it was an important moment from the institutional standpoint, but that rather short intervention time frames were foreseen. He gave an update on CALRE’s participation in the works of the consultation commissions in the Committee of the Regions, specifying that the Association had offered its own contribution to the development of two themes: the “European Charter of Children’s Rights” and the defining of the features of the “European Heritage Label.”

Peter Straub, President of the Landtag of Baden-Württemberg then intervened, underlining the timeliness of dealing with the issue of working groups and their activities, considering that two groups as a matter of fact, were still concretely operating.

President Kessler, upon expressing his agreement on the same demands evidenced, furthermore recalled that in the Italian Autonomous Regions where recent elections were held, the installation in office still had not been held for the elected Presidents of the Legislative Assemblies. And therefore in his view, there were still no important information for a complex evaluation in this regard. Moreover, in light of the speech of the President of the Landtag of Baden-Württemberg, he anticipated the examination of point 8 of the agenda.

Point 8 of the agenda: working groups

Alberto Cerise, President of the Regional Council of Valle D'Aosta, in highlighting the transitory circumstances characterising the present times, confirmed what President Kessler said regarding the activities of the working groups.

Retaining that Italy may undertake the commitment to follow a working group, President Kessler ensured that a proposal may be formalized to this regard in the Standing Committee’s next meeting. He also believed that the initiative may involve also more than one Region and that certainly one of the issues of interest may concern support programmes to promote the new forms of democracy that are developing.

Arantza Quiroga Cía, President of the Basque Parliament, after expressing gratitude for the excellent organization of the current meeting, said that the San Sebastian meeting set for 8th July this year will certainly be an important moment of debate under this profile.

Further to the issue of working groups, President Kessler recalled the seminar on the principle of subsidiarity set for 28th June this year in Barcelona organized by Ernest Benach i Pascual, President of the Catalan Parliament. He gave positive comments on the work performed as of today by the two groups still active, retaining that the main problem involves

both the promotion of a dynamic synergy towards all the members, in terms of a concrete spin-off of relevant information. He observed how under this aspect, the web forum activated may carry out an important role. To resolve translation problems which existed in some cases, he recommended the use of English as the base language, and the use of the other languages only exclusively for particularly important documents.

Peter Straub, President of the Landtag of Baden-Württemberg, thanked the President for his commitment in establishing valid relations, and proposed the invitation of Johannes Hahn, European Commissioner for Regional Policy, to the Plenary Assembly.

President Kessler absolutely agreed with President Straub's proposal, and commits to make the necessary moves to this end.

Point 3 of the agenda:

- status of the CALRE – Regleg agreement

President Kessler introduced the discussion on point 3 of the agenda by saying that he had met the Regleg Secretary General in Brussels on Thursday, 8th April. To this regard he relayed that this association was not interested in undersigning a tripartite agreement which also included the Council of Europe, but in an agreement exclusively with CALRE. Placing the accent on the undeniable analogy existing between the two associations, he summarised the main differences distinguishing the two: the recognition of greater powers for the political representatives of CALRE, which justifies the four annual meetings of the Standing Committee, and the absence of meetings at a technical level, compared to what occurs in Regleg, where the secretary generals frequently meet, and where only one final meeting is held at political level. Taking note of Regleg's interest in signing an agreement with CALRE, he said that he had asked the association to examine a draft proposal which contained in part, the tripartite agreement, and further traced the initial concepts with the principal objective of boosting the flow of information between the two associations. The President, after taking arrangements for copies to be distributed to the assembly, marked out the more innovative section, point 6, which developed the themes relating to the possible forms of cooperation through a fixed organization with headquarters in Brussels, an aspect already widely discussed in January by the Standing Committee. During the meeting of 8th April, he specified that he had also mentioned the possibility of Regleg's paying its part of the fees, assigning to this regard, one of its officers already stationed in Brussels.

Herwig van Staa, President of the Regional Parliament of Tyrol, after his report on his participation in the works of Regleg, underlined the importance of the merging between CALRE and Regleg because of their various delegations, so as to strengthen their own roles as interlocutors at European level. Moreover, taking into consideration such a hypothesis which is still a rather ambitious goal, he declared that he was in favour of the draft agreement proposed by President Kessler.

President Kessler took note of President van Staa's declarations and due to the time and considering the importance of this topic, called for a short break from 11.15 to 11.30.

When the meeting resumed at 11.30 President Kessler took up point 3 of the agenda again, specifying also in light of President van Staa's speech, that Regleg. showed great interest in the signing of an agreement with CALRE, as regards the activities of the working group formed within the Committee of the Regions composed of representatives of local

governments and the Regional Legislative Assemblies. Though retaining the importance of this aspect, he observed that the necessity of an agreement with Regleg arose from broader motivations: in fact, the great importance lies in overcoming the vision of the Committee of the Regions, essentially focussed on roles and powers of local governments. He recalled that in the Committee of the Regions there are very few representatives of the Regional Legislative Assemblies.

Josè Miguel Jardim d'Olivall Mendonça, President of the Legislative Assembly of the Autonomous Region of Madeira, spoke up to highlight the importance of the Regional Legislative Assemblies pursuing their own autonomous paths with respect to the local governments. He affirmed that because of this, he agreed with the issues expressed by the President and the consequential signing of the agreement presented in this meeting.

Arantza Quiroga Cía, President of the Basque Parlamento Basco, also agreed with the agreement and with what President Mendonça had said.

Herwig van Staa, President of the Regional Parliament of Tyrol, emphasized the importance of maintaining a communications channel open between the two associations and between the regional legislative assemblies and local governments, to ensure the adequate circulation of information and affirmed his own support for the initiative assumed by President Kessler.

President Kessler communicated that he would keep all informed of the succeeding phases to be defined, and retained himself to be thus authorized to proceed towards the fulfilment of the commitments undertaken. In light of the current debate he believed that, in keeping with the agreement, an ulterior objective could be set to undertake a common action to reinforce the role within the Committee of the Regions in the awareness however, that the Committee members and even more, the members of the Legislative Assemblies respond to their own local governments. Further to such finalities, he proposed to write to the CALRE members to verify the number of representatives of the Committee of the Regions and by whom they were elected, inasmuch as the reference provisions may differ. Once this statistical research has been arranged, he saw the possibility of taking more decisive actions to strengthen the sense of belonging to Legislative Assemblies.

Points 4 and 5 of the agenda

- **amendments to the CALRE organisational rules;**
- **discussion on the CALRE's legal framework.**

President Kessler subjected to examination by the assembly, the first draft of the modifications proposed for the CALRE rules, with the double objective of operating on one hand, a systematic-linguistic revision, and on the other, responding to the substantial types of demands. As to the second aspect, he called for greater attention to the role of the Assemblies compared to that of the presidents, aimed at awarding the continuity and commitment of the single councils, the diversification of participation levels with the provision for the new status of observer members, a more organic and rational discipline of the internal organs, the adoption of two languages, English and French for the documents, and also the introduction of forms of subsidies aimed at guaranteeing the Association with greater stability as a whole.

Arantza Quiroga Cía, President of the Basque Parliament, retained that it was necessary to identify a common path that may reasonably lead to the examination and approval of the changes proposed during the Plenary Assembly.

President Kessler saw the suitability of involving in this first stage, by way of exception, the members of the Standing Committee, even if all the members will be provided with the adequate information. After verifying the consent of the assembly, he communicated that he would see to the transmission of a comparative document between the rules in force and those proposed, with a brief comment summarising the contents, and requested for possible observations to be sent by this coming 31st May.

Peter Straub, President of the Baden-Württemberg Landtag, noted that the national organization representing the Lander would meet only at the end of June.

President Kessler reaffirmed the suitability of limiting consultations at this stage to members of the Standing Committee, to be later extended for discussion to all the members after the Standing Committee meeting this coming 8th July. He affirmed that the final document would have to be approved by the Plenary Assembly.

**Point 6 of the agenda:
- preliminary discussion for the Presidency 2011**

President Kessler reminded the assembly of the necessity to start considering the next CALRE Presidency.

Peter Straub, President of the Landtag Baden-Württemberg, expressed the willingness of Bavaria in this regard. He also asked to change the dates foreseen for the Plenary Assembly inasmuch as it coincided with the “open days” of Brussels.

President Kessler expressed his doubts on the possibility of making the changes requested, given that the dates had already been set a long time ago. As to the communications of President Straub, he retained that every discussion on this topic may be done during the next session of the Standing Committee. He ended the meeting by thanking President Mendonça once again for the hospitality offered to all, and the assembly for their participation.

The session closed at 1.45 p.m.

CALRE President
Giovanni Kessler
(President of the Council of the Autonomous Province of
Trento)

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