



Regione Umbria
Assemblea legislativa

**PRESIDENCY OF CALRE
HANDOVER CEREMONY
Perugia, 21 January 2019**

***Greetings from President Donatella Porzi,
President of the Legislative Assembly of Umbria and President of CALRE***

I wish to thank the President of the Regional Government of Umbria, Catuscia Marini, and the auxiliary Bishop of PERUGIA, Monsignor Paolo Giulietti, for attending my inaugural ceremony as President of CALRE today.

I would also like to thank our distinguished speakers, who kindly accepted to take part in the day's events and add material value to the symbolic value of the ceremony by talking on a wide variety of topics based on the common theme: "*Ex pluribus unum: Self-government and the future of Europe*". Standing next to them, my thanks go to the acclaimed contributor to the Sole24Ore and expert in international politics and the Vatican, Mr Carlo Marroni.

Lastly, I would like to thank the President, Ana Luìs, for her work over the last year as President of CALRE, for her unsparing commitment and energy to consolidate existing relationships and create new ones. She has contributed to strengthening CALRE among its European counterparts and brought new contributions to stimulate reflection on how to defend the prerogatives and interests of European Regional Legislative Assemblies with legislative powers.

In November 2018, the Plenary Assembly of CALRE (Conference of European Regional Legislative Assemblies) elected me as President for 2019. It is a great honour and exceptional responsibility for me, especially considering the difficult and, may I say, decisive times Europe is experiencing for our future and that of our country and the new generations.

My Presidency will basically continue along the lines of that of Ana Luìs, who will be carefully and actively working alongside me as *Past President*, to tackle the continual challenges Europe is facing. As we wait for European citizens to decide what type of Union they want when they elect their representatives at the European Parliament and for the Commission and its President, I intend to pay special attention to the Europe of rights, a critical question for the future of the Union, deeply rooted in the origin of the single currency and in the ideals of the Manifesto of Ventotene, an island which has become one of the most significant places in European history.

To what extent will Europe be able to defend its already corroded identity as a stronghold of rights and as market regulator to protect not just economic freedom but freedom in general? To what extent will it be able to keep up with the increasingly complicated process to integrate laws, which regulate relationships between capital and employment and the redistribution of



Regione Umbria
Assemblea legislativa

income, and which guarantee social rights, the development of sustainability and compliance with the so-called *Rule of Law* by the Member States?

At Ventotene last year, 140 young people from all over the EU drew up the European Youth Treaty, also renamed the *Rights Pact*. It set out topics, such as peace, diversity for all, hospitality, equality, democracy, communication between the European forces, information and participation, a younger Europe, freedom of speech, free, protected borders, solidarity and ecological conscience. They wrote: "The scourge of Europe is not diversity, it is fear. And we are afraid when we don't know each other."

As I was programming the commitments arising from my new appointment, I thought of hosting a session of the permanent Committee, one of the customary appointments in the CALRE work schedule, on the island of Ventotene between June and July. I intend to organise an event on the Europe of Rights, inspired by the words of our President of the Republic, Sergio Mattarella, in his New Year's message, who paid tribute to Antonio Megalizzi, who died in the Strasbourg shooting and whom he recalled as being *"like many other young people intent on creating a Europe with fewer boundaries and more justice. He understood that difficulties can be overcome by relaunching the project for a Europe of rights, citizens and peoples, social harmony, to fight for peace and against hatred."*

My Presidency will also continue to encourage collaboration with European institutions and the Regional Committee.

As the Council is currently chaired by a Romanian president, I will be visiting Bucharest in March to represent CALRE at the 7th European Summit of Regions and Cities, organised in collaboration with the Rumanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the European Commission and the Committee of the Regions, with the exciting title of *"(Re)New Europe"*. This is an important date in the European pre-electoral calendar. Europe needs its regions and cities as much as they need Europe. This moment in time is crucial, not only for the future of Europe, but also for our planet, unless we follow up the commitments we have taken on climate change and our objectives of sustainable development. The Summit will produce a declaration of the Regions and Cities based on the key concepts of democracy, in which the regional and local representatives play a key role; solidarity in the sense that no person or place in Europe is left behind; European neighbourhood and community policies which take into account local requirements. I will take part on the panel dedicated to *Active Subsidiarity*, a new term found in the conclusions of the "Task Force on Subsidiarity, Proportionality and Doing Less More Efficiently", chaired by the Vice Chairman of the Commission, Frans Timmermans, which basically calls the regions and their governments to play an active role in all phases of the European political cycle.



Regione Umbria
Assemblea legislativa

CALRE and the Committee of the Regions will collaborate more effectively this year since the Committee of the Regions has accepted the application of the Italian Conference of the Regional Assemblies to co-organise the 2019 General Assembly on Subsidiarity in Rome, hosted by the Italian Senate. We intend to hold this event around the time of the plenary Assembly of CALRE which will be held in Perugia, in order to enable all the European regional assemblies to attend both events, if they so wish.

In fact, I believe we need to facilitate meetings and exchanges between European regional governments to the maximum as they are irreplaceable tools to boost the progress of the Regions in Europe. We should remember that, thanks to the work carried out by CALRE in the past, European regional governments appear clearly as institutional interlocutors in the protocol on subsidiarity and proportionality attached to the Lisbon Treaty. Once again, it is thanks to the work by CALRE and other European associations representing regional and local authorities that, as a result of the Convention on the future of Europe, territorial cohesion was included in the European Treaties as the Union's explicit objective. Multi-level governance passed from abstract principle to become the paradigm, on which to construct Europe in partnership, despite the difficulties of which we are well aware. And it will be thanks to our coordinated work, whether our Governments will be able to contribute their authoritative voice to the debate on the future of the European Union which, although currently at a standstill, has already begun, if not formally, at least in the minds and hearts of all those who, in one way or another, believe *Europe matters*.