



Meeting of the Standing Committee and plenary session of CALRE

on 28 January 2026

**chaired by the Parliament of the Canary Islands
(Tenerife)**

Report from the working group „Future and Reforms of CALRE“

Background

On the initiative of the Parliament of the Brussels-Capital Region, the CALRE plenary session decided at the end of 2023 to set up a temporary working group on the future and reforms of CALRE in order to identify the assembly's potential for improvement and necessary reforms. It was initially chaired by the President of the Regional Parliament of Madeira.

On 2 July 2025, at the CALRE plenary assembly, the presidency was transferred from Madeira to the First Vice-President of the Bavarian State Parliament, Tobias Reiß.

Regional parliaments have a special responsibility to represent parliamentary control and transparency at European level as well. This requires a professional structure and a clearer thematic focus within CALRE.

Twenty-seven representatives from six member states (Belgium, Germany, Italy, Austria, Portugal and Spain) have signed up to participate in the CALRE working group on the future and reform of CALRE.

The working group has set itself the goal of further developing CALRE both organisationally and thematically and strengthening its role and the opportunities for participation of regional parliaments with legislative powers in the European Union in order to highlight the parliamentary dimension at EU level even more clearly. In addition, CALRE should be recognised as a partner and point of contact for the European institutions, alongside the European Committee of the Regions (CoR).

Summary of the working group meeting

On Tuesday, 4 November 2025, the working group chaired by the Bavarian State Parliament met for the first time in Brussels at the premises of the CoR.

Together with MEP Andrey Novakov and Tobias Linnemann, Director of Parliamentary Affairs for the EPP Group in the European Parliament, the members of the working group discussed opportunities for closer cooperation with the European Parliament to defend and preserve parliamentary democracy in Europe and what reforms the committee should tackle to increase its visibility in the European Union.

MEP Novakov emphasised the need for pragmatic solutions from the regions for European policy-making and invited the members of the working group to a joint meeting at the European Parliament in Brussels, which could serve as a starting point for ongoing dialogue within the multi-level system of the European Union.

Manfred Weber, MEP and chair of the EPP Group, who was also a guest at the working group meeting, sent an important signal. He expressed his close ties to the actors in the regions and emphasised how crucial it is to connect Europe with its citizens. Regional parliaments make an indispensable contribution through public democratic discourse. Weber emphasised in the discussion with the working group members that anyone who wants to strengthen Europe must involve local parliaments and governments. The ongoing reforms could permanently establish CALRE as an association of regional parliaments with legislative powers and as an important dialogue partner in the EU.

Discussion on reform ideas

The working group members (presidents, vice-presidents and members of the regional parliaments, as well as some representatives from the working level of the regional parliaments) discussed the future direction of CALRE as the sole body of regional parliaments with legislative powers at European level, based on the reform proposals submitted (namely from Germany and Austria, Wallonia, the German-speaking Community of Belgium, Lombardy, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, the Azores and Madrid) on the future direction of CALRE as the sole body of regional parliaments with legislative powers at European level.

In summary, it can be said that the reform ideas of the working group members are largely consistent and point in a similar direction for the reorientation of CALRE.

Among other things, they include the following:

- CALRE should focus more on its core task (promoting active subsidiarity and representing original parliamentary interests) and key issues, and represent fewer particular interests;
- the annual plenary assembly to be held in Brussels in order to create proximity to the EU institutions,
- a liaison office to be set up in Brussels, and
- the number of possible working groups to be reduced.

The working groups should remain free to set their own agendas and choose their own meeting venues.

With regard to setting up a CALRE office in Brussels, the members of the working group are primarily concerned with establishing continuity and a reliable point of contact both internally and externally. The specific details of this idea remain open. This will be finalised in the next meetings.

The proposal by the Parliament of the German-speaking Community of Belgium – initially open-ended – to extend the term of the presidency and establish a rotating system was also discussed.

The Parliament of Wallonia also proposed focusing on adopting substantive resolutions on major European issues, placing the main emphasis on subsidiarity and establishing a structured political dialogue. Coordination between the Standing Committee and the plenary session also needed to be improved. Consideration should also be given to reviving the CALRE and CoR pilot project entitled ‘Contribution of political debates in regional parliaments’.

The Parliament of Friuli-Venezia Giulia, like the Flemish Parliament, emphasised the principle of ‘less is more’ and the importance of good, modern external communication (social media).

The Parliament of the Azores put forward proposals to enable greater online participation in meetings in order to give all members the opportunity to participate.

Next steps

The working group should continue its work and draw up a resolution document on reforms by the end of this year for submission to the plenary assembly. This may also require amendments to the CALRE statutes, which would also have to be voted on by the plenary assembly.

Appendix:

- Appendix 1: Minutes of the working group meeting on 4 November 2025 in Brussels
- Appendix 2: Synopsis of the reform ideas submitted