



**CONCLUSIONS OF THE EUROPEAN SUMMIT OF THE REGIONS AND CITIES ON
5 AND 6 MARCH 2009 IN PRAGUE**



EUROPEAN UNION



Committee of the Regions



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on 5 and 6 March 2009 in Prague**

We, members of the Committee of the Regions and elected representatives of regional and local authorities gathered here in Prague on 5 and 6 March on the occasion of the European Summit of the Regions and Cities, and at a time when the European Union is celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin wall, Solidarnose's victory in Poland and the fifth anniversary of the enlargement of the EU to central and eastern Europe:

- **Stress** that the European citizens expect greater security, stability and efficiency from the European Union and that they request from the EU institutions political management which is closer to the people and more in tune with their day-to-day life.
- **Reaffirm** that the achievements of the European Union, its process of political integration, its common policies and, in particular, its regional policy, are an unquestionable strength with regard to overcoming the consequences of the economic and financial crisis and responding to global challenges.
- **Express** our deep concern about the repercussions of the global economic and financial crisis for businesses and citizens in our regions, cities and municipalities and its impact on their jobs, living conditions and confidence in the future.
- **Are convinced** that only a united, ambitious Europe based on solidarity and collective responsibility, with nearly 500 million inhabitants, will be able to:
 - strengthen the competitiveness of its economy and restore the confidence of consumers and economic players
 - ensure economic, social and territorial cohesion
 - tackle the effects of climate change
 - guarantee the security of energy supply and universal access to energy at affordable prices
 - improve its capacity to work towards a true political union whilst preserving its diversity.
- **Recall** that the European Union will not be able to respond to the challenges and opportunities of globalisation without the direct involvement of regional and local authorities in devising and implementing Community strategies, in compliance with the principles of subsidiarity, responsibility and shared competences.
- **Underline** the importance of the crucial role of regional and local authorities, working for economic, ecological and social change, in launching innovative initiatives and facilitating the cooperation which is vital for economic competitiveness and the quality of people's life.
- **Are therefore determined** to contribute to the success of economic, social and sustainable reform in Europe. This reform must be based on a more decentralised Community growth and employment strategy and on cohesion policy, which are key instruments for promoting real economic growth and maintaining solidarity between citizens.

– **Call for:**

- coordinated action at all levels of political responsibility in order to ensure the success of the European economic recovery plan and to protect citizens against the negative consequences of the economic slowdown and job cuts;
- the restoration of confidence in the financial system by introducing effective mechanisms for the surveillance of financial institutions;
- the adoption after 2010 of a genuine European growth and employment strategy, based on the partnership between the European Union, the Member States and its regions and cities, which fosters long-term investment in education, training, research and innovation and the development of quality infrastructures and energy-efficient technologies;
- the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, which will strengthen both Europe's capacity to decide and act in the world and the shared responsibility of the different levels of power for achieving common objectives, in accordance with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality;
- an ambitious reform of the Community budget, combining the objectives of competitiveness, solidarity and sustainability;
- an overall strategy for guaranteeing energy security and adaptation to climate change;
- a strong regional policy which can support all the regions, which takes into account the effects of the current crisis, particularly with regard to the eligibility of regions for structural funds after 2013, which incorporates as a crucial challenge an urban policy for the sustainable development of European cities and which, through cohesion policy and complementary instruments, strengthens territorial cooperation not only between EU regions but also with regions in third countries;
- an integrated and comprehensive approach to migration and integration based on the efforts of local and regional authorities;
- multi-level governance which, in compliance with the principle of subsidiarity, fully involves local and regional authorities in the Community decision-making process

– **Therefore request:**

- **the Member States**, in accordance with the commitments made at the meeting of Heads of State or Government on 1 March 2009, to adopt a clear position against national protectionism and to safeguard the potential of the internal market to support the recovery and growth of the European economy;
- **the Member States and the European Commission** to take note, at the European Council meeting on 19 and 20 March 2009, of the Committee of the Regions' commitment to implementing the Lisbon Strategy and its reform, promoting the incorporation of regional reform plans into national strategic plans and developing local governance involvement indicators in order to assess the national plans for reform that are submitted;
- **the European Commission** to draw up a White Paper on territorial cohesion, the definition, objectives and funding of territorial cohesion of which are such as to guarantee equity and solidarity between territories and make an effective contribution towards ensuring climate protection and addressing the effects of globalisation and the demographic challenge;

- **the European Investment Bank** to support the financing and investment capacities of regional and local authorities: investment in innovation, research and knowledge in regions and cities and the development of the public-private partnership are fundamental for the success of the European recovery plan;
 - **the Community institutions** to improve lawmaking, to reduce administrative procedures and to take account of the principles of proportionality and simplification;
 - **national parliaments** to listen to the voice of regional and local authorities which are willing to take part in monitoring subsidiarity with regard to European legislative acts having a territorial impact;
 - **the media and members of the public** to foster, stimulate and take part, during the European election campaigns, in the political debate for the election of the European Parliament for the next term covering the period 2009-2014.
- **Announce** our intention to be actively involved in the campaign for the next European elections in June 2009 and strongly **invite** citizens to determine, through the ballot box, the political and strategic choices of the European Union for the next five years.

Let's build Europe in partnership!

Luc Van den Brande
President of the Committee of the Regions

These conclusions were endorsed by:

- AEBR (Association of European Border Regions)
- AER (Assembly of European Regions)
- CPMR (Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions)
- CALRE (Conference of Presidents of the Regional Legislative Assemblies of Europe)
- REGLEG (Conference of Presidents of Regions with legislative power) and the AEM (European Association of elected representatives from Mountain Areas)
- CEMR (Council of European Municipalities and Regions)
- EUROCITIES.