

EUROPEAN UNION



Committee of the Regions



Official translation

**COOPERATION AGREEMENT
BETWEEN
THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS
AND
THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES OF THE
COUNCIL OF EUROPE**

Signed on 13 April 2005

THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS AND THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL
AUTHORITIES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE,

Having regard to article 303 of the Treaty establishing the European Community,

Having regard to the European Charter of Local Self-Government,

Having regard to article 2 point 1 of the Statutory Resolution 2000 (1) of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe relating to the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (hereafter “the Congress”),

Having regard to the Protocol (30) on the application of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, annexed to the Treaty establishing the European Community, and the Draft Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe which reinforce the position of local and regional authorities and of the Committee of the Regions,

Having regard to the exchanges of letters of 16 June 1987 and 5 November 1996 between the Council of Europe and the European Commission and the following Joint declaration on cooperation and partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Commission, adopted in Strasbourg on 3 April 2001, and,

Having regard to the rule 189 of the rules of procedure of the European Parliament,

Having regard to the respective decisions of 8 March 1996 and 1 July 1996 of the Bureaux of the Committee of the Regions and the Congress to establish a Contact Group between the Committee of the Regions and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (hereafter “the Contact Group”),

Having regard to the letter of 11 May 2004 from the Chief Executive of the Congress to the Secretary General of the Committee of the Regions,

Having regard to the conclusions of the Contact Group meeting held on 13 July 2004 in Paris,

Having regard to the Joint Declaration¹ adopted in Prague on 21 September 2004 by the Commission for Constitutional Affairs and European Governance of the Committee of the Regions and the Institutional Committee of the Congress,

Whereas the Congress and the Committee of the Regions share values and objectives in strengthening local and regional democracy in Europe,

Whereas the Congress and the Committee of the Regions have legal instruments at their disposal to monitor the principle of subsidiarity,

¹

CdR 202/2004.

Whereas the Congress and the Committee complement each other without encroaching each others competences,

HAVE AGREED AS FOLLOWS:

I Objectives

1. The main objective of this cooperation agreement is to support reciprocally the efforts undertaken by both institutions in advancing local and regional democracy, devolution and self-governance in Europe and to guarantee the respect of established local and regional competences by national and European authorities. By combining their forces, the two institutions shall enhance the complementarity of their activities in the interest of regional and local authorities in Europe.
2. In all common activities due prominence is given to the joint character of these activities and to each partner's even visibility. In this respect, the Committee of the Regions and the Congress should envisage, where appropriate and in matters on which the two institutions co-operate closely and share the same position, to outline the Committee of the Regions' or the Congress' opinion in their respective texts to be adopted.

II Methods of cooperation

1. The Contact Group is the primary form of cooperation between the two institutions and it has the main responsibility of conducting relations between the two institutions. The Contact Group is composed of six members of each institution and meets at least twice a year. Other members of the Committee of the Regions and of the Congress can be associated with the Contact Group meetings as observers. The Presidents of the Congress and the Committee of the Regions have the right to participate actively in the Contact Group activities when they consider it necessary.
2. The presidency of the Contact Group rotates yearly between the two institutions. The Contact Group elects a chairman and a vice-chairman to ensure a representation of each institution. The chairman and the vice-chairman establish jointly the draft agenda for the meetings. The institution holding the presidency ensures the secretariat of the Contact Group.

III Common priorities and activities

1. On the basis of the established political priorities of the two institutions, the Contact Group identifies annually common priorities for cooperation and defines common activities. The activities will be framed in such a way that, within the common priorities agreed, specific activities can be added or adapted to meet new needs or take account of changes in circumstances.

2. The Contact Group cannot make binding decisions on behalf of the institutions it represents.
3. The Presidents, the chairpersons, rapporteurs and the secretariats of the commissions and committees exchange views and information on the basis of the annual priorities and the respective programmes of activities.
4. The secretariats of both institutions ensure the administrative support and follow-up of these exchanges and make sure that common activities are carried out in an appropriate way.

IV Subsidiarity monitoring

1. The Committee of the Regions and the Congress support each other's efforts to establish efficient and effective monitoring of the subsidiarity principle in the European Union and in the Council of Europe's Member States.
2. In particular, they give primary importance to actions for bringing politics closer to the citizens, in favour of the respect of human rights and of a sustainable quality of life for the citizens.

V Financial provisions

The present agreement does not imply financial engagements other than the ones taken respectively by the two institutions according to their internal rules.

VI Evaluation of the cooperation and revision of the cooperation agreement

1. The Contact Group evaluates regularly the development of the cooperation between the two institutions and gives an evaluation report to their respective Bureaux every second year.
 2. The present cooperation agreement can be revised by mutual agreement at the initiative of one of the two institutions.
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Brussels, 13 April 2005

The President
of the Committee of the Regions

The President
of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities
of the Council of Europe

Peter STRAUB

Giovanni DI STASI