

# The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities



## Chamber of Regions

**19<sup>th</sup> SESSION**  
**CPR(19)3**  
11 October 2010

## Co-operation between the Congress and associations representing regions in Europe

Bureau of the Chamber of Regions

Rapporteur: Mrs Ludmila SFIRLOAGA, Romania (SOC<sup>1</sup>), Mr Herwig Van STAA, Austria (EPP/CD)

A. Draft Resolution .....	2
B. Explanatory Memorandum .....	4

### *Summary*

"Work[ing] in close co-operation, on the one hand with the national, democratic associations of local and regional authorities, and, on the other hand, with the European organisations representing local and regional authorities of the member States of the Council of Europe, and notably with the Committee of the Regions of the European Union" is one of the objectives of the Congress set out in Statutory Resolution (2007) 6 (Article 2, para 1, e).

The Congress (Chamber of Local Authorities and Chamber of Regions) as a whole maintains regular relations with national and European associations of local and regional authorities and – following a hearing with leaders of those associations and a decision by the Bureau – has granted observer status to some European associations.

For its part, the Chamber of Regions maintains close working relations with the main associations representing "regions" in Europe.

At a time when the Congress is preparing to adopt a major reform of its structures and working methods, it is important to assess the existing co-operation arrangements and agree a new working framework so that the Congress and the Chamber of Regions derive maximum benefit from these working relations with European regional associations.

This report highlights the importance of the co-operation here, in terms both of publicising the work of the Congress on regional democracy more widely and of turning the experience of these organisations to good account, given the wide range of regional interests which they represent.

Following analysis of the objectives of the main associations and assessment of the various types of relations established with the Congress, the report sets out practical proposals for co-operation to be established with the individual organisations (in particular with those holding observer status with the Congress) with a view to contributing to the development of regional democracy in Europe.

---

<sup>1</sup> L: Chamber of Local Authorities / R: Chamber of Regions  
ILDG: Independent and Liberal Democrat Group of the Congress  
EPP/CD: European People's Party – Christian Democrats of the Congress  
SOC: Socialist Group of the Congress  
NR: Members not belonging to a Political Group of the Congress



## A. DRAFT RESOLUTION<sup>2</sup>

1. On the basis of Statutory Resolution (2007) 6, the Congress – in particular the Chamber of Regions – has established dialogue and close co-operation with the associations representing local and regional authorities in Europe which hold observer status with the Congress within the meaning of the Congress Charter (Article 5, para 1).

2. The Chamber of Regions believes that the European associations representing regions play a vital role and therefore co-operates actively with these bodies, which are the voice of the various types of region on the European arena.

3. This dialogue and co-operation complement the other consultation processes (in particular, the General Meeting of Associations, the 3<sup>rd</sup> session of which was held on 16 September 2010) organised by the Congress, especially with national associations representing local and regional authorities in the member states and with several associations in non-members of the Council of Europe.

4. The co-operation supplements the key functions of the Chamber of Regions and helps enhance its institutional activities by providing additional input on the diversity of regional issues in Europe, although the Congress itself decides on its priorities and its activities.

5. Following an initial assessment of the co-operation arrangements, the Congress instructs the Chamber of Regions and its Bureau to take account of the added value of co-operation with these regional associations and of their level of expertise and representativeness, while ensuring that the costs involved are kept within the limits of the budget allocated to the Congress.

6. With a view to ensuring co-operation that is suited to the specific nature of the individual associations, taking account of their respective experience and characteristics, the Congress invites the Chamber of Regions and its Bureau:

a. to continue the co-operation with the two general European organisations (which are invited as observers to the meetings of the Bureau of the Chamber of Regions), ie the Assembly of European Regions (AER) and the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), while making sure that the President of the Congress and/ or the President of the Chamber of Regions (or his/her representative) attends the general assemblies of these associations, as well as conferences/seminars of specific interest to the Congress held by them, depending on the priorities and the budget of the Congress;

b. to establish more specific co-operation with the three other associations holding observer status with the Congress: the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR), the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR) and the Conference of European Regional Legislative Assemblies (CALRE);

c. to implement the two partnership agreements concluded with the AEBR on 18 March 2010 (by developing common activities in the area of cross-border co-operation) and with the CALRE on 17 September 2010;

---

<sup>2</sup> Preliminary draft resolution approved by the Bureau of the Chamber of Regions on 17 September 2010.

Members of the Bureau of the Chamber of Regions:

*L. Sfirloaga (President), K. Andersen (Vice-President), I. Borbely (Vice-President), G. Krug (Vice-President), I. Michas (Vice-President), S. Orlova (Vice-President), N. Romanova (Vice-President).*

N.B.: The names of members who took part in the vote are in italics.

Secretariat of the Bureau of the Chamber of Regions: JP. Chauvet

*d.* to continue in a more focused manner the co-operation with the other associations, institutes and foundations holding observer status with the Congress: the Association of the Working Communities of the Alpine Regions (ARGEALP), the European Foundation for the Sustainable Development of the Regions (FEDRE) and the European Centre for the Regions (European Institute of Public Administration, Barcelona).

7. The Congress also instructs the Chamber of Regions and its Bureau to maintain appropriate working relations with several associations and institutes which do not hold observer status with the Congress, in accordance with the following principles:

*a.* develop closer co-operation with REGLEG (Conference of Presidents of Regions with Legislative Power) and maintain relations with a view to signing a co-operation agreement;

*b.* develop co-operation with the Adriatic Euroregion and the Black Sea Euroregion, set up on the initiative of the Congress;

*c.* establish working relationships on a case-by-case basis with the other associations and institutes:

- the Assembly of European Wine Regions (AREV)
- the Institute of the Regions of Europe (IRE)
- the Centre d'Observation Européen des Régions (CŒUR)
- the Forum of Global Associations of Regions (FOGAR), (set up in 2007 with the ultimate aim of becoming a regional "lobby" at the United Nations).

8. With a view to increasing the added value of the co-operation arrangements, the Congress calls on the Chamber of Regions and its Bureau:

*a.* to expand exchanges of information and best practice and, where appropriate, hold seminars and conferences in co-operation with the relevant associations and institutes, taking account of the priorities and budget of the Congress;

*b.* to hold ad hoc consultations or hearings with the highest-level representatives of European and national associations of regions concerning:

- trends in regionalisation in Europe;
- the implementation of the Reference Framework for Regional Democracy (adopted in October 2009) and the preparation of a future European Convention on regional democracy;

*c.* to determine, in accordance with the topics addressed by the Congress, the associations invited to take part in the relevant activities, taking account of their experience and specific features and ensuring balanced representation of the various European associations;

9. The Congress invites the Committee of the Regions of the European Union to involve it in its work on regions with legislative powers, on the inter-regional and cross-border co-operation as well as in that of the macro-regions in Europe.

## **B. EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM**

### **I. Introduction**

1. Under Article 2 of Statutory Resolution (2007) 6, the Congress has the task of "promot[ing] co-operation between local and regional authorities" (Article 2c) and "work[ing] in close co-operation [...] with the European organisations representing local and regional authorities of the member states of the Council of Europe, and notably with the Committee of the Regions of the European Union" (Article 2e). The Chamber of Regions maintains working relations with the European associations representing regions in order both to publicise the Congress' work more widely and to take advantage of their expertise in its own activities.

2. In formal terms and in keeping with the spirit of the statutory resolution, several European organisations representing regions have been granted observer status with the Congress at their request. Other associations, foundations and institutes which have not requested observer status nevertheless also co-operate with the Congress. The degree of co-operation between the Congress and these associations therefore varies depending on their level of representativeness and expertise.

3. During the 17th plenary session of the Congress, the Chamber of Regions held a round table on 15 October 2009 on co-operation between European regions: objectives, structures and networks, which was attended by representatives of the various European organisations which have the closest working relations with the Chamber of Regions. The conclusion K-H Lambertz drew from the round table was that closer co-operation could increase the effectiveness of the Congress' work.

4. At its meeting on 15 January 2010, the Bureau of the Chamber of Regions assessed the outcome of the round table and appointed two rapporteurs to prepare a report on co-operation with the major associations representing regions in Europe: Ludmila SFIRLOAGA (Romania, SOC) and Herwig VAN STAA (Austria, EPP/CD).

5. This report sets out an assessment by the Congress of the working relations established with the individual European organisations representing regions and submits proposals to the Chamber of Regions on the future relations to be developed with them, taking account of the reforms under way at the Council of Europe and the Congress.

### **II. Framework and arrangements for co-operation with the regional associations**

#### **1. Framework for co-operation**

6. Alongside the official institutions (Congress at the Council of Europe and Committee of the Regions at the European Union), the associations representing regions help to increase awareness of the importance of regions within the European architecture and European policies. They also play a part in promoting the process of regionalisation in Europe and help to develop co-operation between the regions in the 27 countries of the European Union and in the 47 Council of Europe member states. Moreover, the organisations share the Council of Europe's fundamental values in terms of respect for human rights, democracy and citizen participation.

7. It is therefore of particular benefit to the Congress to co-operate with the European associations in order:

- to highlight the achievements of the Congress, in particular the principles of regional democracy (Reference Framework for Regional Democracy) and the Council of Europe's core areas of expertise: human rights, protection of minorities, intercultural dialogue and regional languages, etc.;
- to take advantage of the platform which the Congress provides for exchanges between the regions in the 27 countries in the European Union and in the 47 in the Council of Europe.

## 2. Representativeness of the associations

8. In representing the interests of the different types of regions in Europe, various organisations and associations reflect the diversity of regional issues around specific common themes (cross-border co-operation, regions with legislative powers, peripheral, maritime and mountain regions, etc). Most of these organisations operate on the basis of voluntary membership by regions, with their own systems of membership dues. In addition to the dues paid by the member regions, these European associations receive contributions from various sources, in particular the European Union. Other organisations operate on the basis of a rotating presidency or chairmanship, with a different region holding the presidency each year<sup>3</sup>. Their influence at European level, with the European Commission, the Committee of the Regions and the Congress, varies significantly from one organisation to the next, for reasons involving their specific characteristics, their number of members and the nature of their expertise, etc. In the case of the Congress, recognition of the organisations and assessment of the possibility of co-operating with them is governed by the procedure for granting observer status provided for in the Congress Charter (Article 5). International associations of local and regional authorities holding participatory status with the Council of Europe also hold observer status with the Congress<sup>4</sup>. "Other organisations may, on request, obtain observer status with the Congress, if its Standing Committee so decides, or with one of its Chambers under the latter's Rules of Procedure." (Article 5, para 1).

9. In the list of the 29 associations holding observer status with the Congress, many are mainly local bodies (associations of municipalities) or mixed bodies (local and regional). The activities of some others involve research or training. This report mainly concerns the following regional or mixed (local and regional) bodies<sup>5</sup> with which the Chamber of Regions maintains regular working relations:

Association	Date observer status was granted
CEMR	01/06/1994
AER	01/06/1994
AEBR	01/06/1994
CPMR	09/10/2007
CALRE	22/05/2003
European Centre for the Regions (Barcelona)	01/03/1997
FEDRE	01/03/2000
ARGEALP	01/06/1994
COPPEM	03/2006
European Association of Elected Representatives from Mountain Regions (AEM)	06/2004
ENTO	05/1998

10. The analysis in this report also covers other organisations and institutes which have not requested observer status with the Congress. In particular, this applies to the following organisations which are involved in certain Congress activities on a case-by-case basis:

- the Assembly of European Wine Regions (AREV)
- the Institute of the Regions of Europe (IRE)
- the Centre d'observation européen des régions (CŒUR)
- the Forum of Global Associations of Regions (FOGAR)
- the European network of cross-border local authorities (EUROMOT).

<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that some regions are members of several European associations. The majority of European regions also have major representative offices at European institutions in Brussels.

<sup>4</sup> Viz the following six associations: AER, ALDA, ARGEALP, AEBR, CPMR and CEMR out of the 366 INGOs holding participatory status with the Council of Europe.

<sup>5</sup> Information about European associations has been compiled by the EU in the register of interest representatives, available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regrin/>.

### **3. *Raising the profile of the Congress***

11. Given the increasing number of associations and of invitations to the Congress to take part in their activities, the Bureau of the Chamber of Regions (under the supervision of the Bureau of the Congress) must make sure that the representation of the Congress is consistent with its priorities and compatible with its limited budget. The Congress must therefore be selective and ensure that its participation in general meetings, conferences, colloquies or other meetings involves real "added value" for the Congress in terms of publicising its own activities more widely and enabling the associations to contribute their expertise as input to the Congress' work.

12. In addition to the communication efforts by the Congress (in particular, its website), the various regional associations are able through their own networks to boost the information available about the Congress' activities and thereby raise the profile of its work among the associations' member regions. The European associations can offer their networks of contacts (which are often extensive) to help promote regional democracy in Europe. They already did so during the preparation of the European Charter on Regional Democracy, for instance.

### **4. *Co-operation arrangements***

13. Without incurring additional expenditure, the Chamber of Regions is able to hold ad hoc hearings with the chairs and/or secretaries general of the regional associations in connection with the preparation of specific Congress reports which involve the associations' areas of competence.

14. Such hearings should enable the regional associations to try out new "networking" methods with the Congress, with a view to ensuring complementarity between activities. Synergy should also be developed between the specialised committees of the various associations and the activities of certain Congress committees and working groups. By way of example, the Congress helped to set up the Black Sea Euroregion. For its part, following an initial conference in January 2010 on regional co-operation in the Black Sea Basin, the AER is planning to hold a summit of Black Sea regions. The co-operation already established here should be continued. Through its Balkans and Black Sea Commission, the CPMR in turn held a conference on the subject in spring 2010. There is therefore scope for complementarity of efforts that should avoid duplication. It is necessary to agree possible areas for co-operation and pool our efforts.

### **III. *Assessment of co-operation***

15. Given the large number of European associations, the assessment of co-operation in this report distinguishes between co-operation with organisations holding observer status and co-operation with other organisations.

## 1. **Co-operation with regional associations holding observer status with the Congress**

### a. Associations holding observer status with the Bureau (AER and CEMR)

16. The associations with which the Chamber of Regions maintains the most official relations are the two organisations which hold observer status with the Bureau of the Congress: the Assembly of European Regions (AER) and the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR). In order to limit the number of observers on the Congress Bureau, the latter decided (in March 2006<sup>6</sup>) to invite two organisations (AER and CEMR) to take part in Bureau meetings in view of their general nature.

17. In the case of the Chamber of Regions, the AER is regularly represented at the meetings of its Bureau (sometimes by its Secretary General). In contrast, the representation of the CEMR is much less regular. Both the AER and the CEMR were represented at the meetings of the Working Group on Regions with Legislative Power and of the working group on inter-regional cooperation GT/CIR (and in the work of certain committees) and provided support with the preparation in 2008 of the European Charter of Regional Democracy and in 2009 of the Reference Framework for Regional Democracy.

18. Lastly, the Congress regularly takes part in the general assemblies (and sometimes Bureau meetings) and in certain conferences held by the AER (for instance, the conference on the Black Sea in January 2010). In addition, regular contacts take place between the Congress and the AER secretariats to exchange information about planned activities and possibilities for co-operation, in particular in areas such as the implementation of the principle of subsidiarity, the level of regionalisation in the various countries and the distribution of powers between central and regional authorities.

19. We believe that the already extensive co-operation with the AER could be expanded through networking involving certain specific issues (such as co-operation in the Black Sea region and regions with legislative power). In contrast, co-operation between the Chamber of Regions and the CEMR has been limited to input by the CEMR during the preparation of a European legal instrument on regional democracy. This is because the membership and purpose of the CEMR are such that it represents the interests both of local and of regional authorities and it is not therefore primarily a regional body. Co-operation between the Chamber of Regions and the CEMR could be expanded in a targeted matter in connection with a number of essentially "regional" issues

### b. Co-operation with the other European associations holding observer status with the Congress

20. The Chamber of Regions maintains regular working relations with a limited number of the 27 other local and regional organisations/associations and institutes holding observer status. The level of co-operation varies greatly from one organisation to the next.

---

<sup>6</sup> The Bureau of the Congress decided on 15 March 2006 to restrict participation in meetings of the Bureau of the Congress to the AER and the CEMR alone, in view of their general nature. The other organisations holding observer status with the Congress may, however, be invited on an ad hoc basis to attend discussion of specific items on the agenda of the Bureau (plenary) or of other Congress bodies, with observers not being allowed to attend *in camera* discussions (decision of the Bureau of the Congress – 15 March 2006).

*Organisations having signed a co-operation agreement with the Congress:*

21. The AEBR signed a co-operation agreement with the Congress in March 2010, reflecting the importance attached by the Congress to transfrontier co-operation issues. The agreement sets out arrangements for making more systematic and effective the already longstanding co-operation with the AEBR, which is currently chaired by Karl-Heinz Lambertz, who is also Chair of the GT/CIR and of the Committee on Culture and Education of the Congress.

22. The CALRE signed a co-operation agreement with the Congress on 17 September 2010, enabling the Congress to step up its working relations with an organisation representing regional legislative assemblies, the activities of which the Congress has followed with interest since it was set up in 1997 (cf Resolution 293(2009)). The agreement follows on from the one signed by the CALRE and the Parliamentary Assembly in 2008.

*Organisations and institutes/foundations:*

23. Among the other organisations holding observer status with the Congress, a number maintain more regular links with the Chamber of Regions:

- CPMR: the current representation of the Congress is restricted to participation in the organisation's annual general assemblies and in some conferences concerning peripheral and maritime regions. It would be wise to develop more regular co-operation with the CPMR, in particular its Balkans and Black Sea, Inter-Mediterranean and Islands Commissions;
- FEDRE: there was active co-operation in the past between the Congress and the FEDRE, especially in connection with the annual Forums of Cities and Regions of South-East Europe from 2000 to 2006. Since then, the FEDRE has followed the activities of NALAS (set up on the initiative of the Congress) and the Congress is invited to the conferences held by the FEDRE in the area of the environment and energy. The FEDRE is headed by C Haegi, former President of the Congress, and wishes the Congress to take part in its 15th anniversary in spring 2011;
- COPPEM: the Congress is regularly involved in the activities of this organisation, whose membership is both "local" and "regional";
- ENTO (European Network of Training Organisations) maintains close ties with the Congress. A report on training issues in Europe will be presented to the Congress at a later date.

24. In the case of the other observer organisations (AMPHICTYONY, ARGEALP, European Association of Elected Representatives from Mountain Regions, European Centre for the Regions – EIPA Barcelona), the relations established with the Congress at certain times are now limited and only involve the preparation of specific reports and conferences.

**2. *Relations with organisations and institutes not holding observer status with the Congress***

25. While relations with some organisations holding observer status are sometimes limited – or, indeed, non-existent – the same does not apply to certain organisations which have not requested observer status but whose activities the Congress follows regularly or with which it intends establishing contacts. In particular:

- REGLEG (Conference of Presidents of Regions with Legislative Power): the Congress helped set up this conference and is represented at each annual session, at the close of which a meeting of the Congress GT/LEG working group has traditionally been held. However, the Congress is not invited to take part in the preparatory work for the conferences. In spite of several approaches to this effect, REGLEG has so far chosen not to negotiate a co-operation agreement with the Congress (of the kind concluded with the CALRE). In our view, contacts should be stepped up with REGLEG officials in order to establish new synergies with the conference so as to take account of the issues affecting the executives of regions with legislative power and ensure the implementation of Resolution 293 on such regions adopted by the Congress on 14 October 2009;

- IRE is a platform for inter-regional dialogue, in which the Congress has been regularly represented. The Chamber of Regions should continue in future to take part in the IRE's activities, given the potential for contacts and partnerships offered by the institute;
- COEUR: the Congress has benefited from research concerning regions conducted by COEUR. It should review the arrangements for its co-operation with the centre;
- FOGAR: this association was set up in 2008 – within the framework of the CPMR – in order to represent regions at global level, especially at the United Nations. The Congress should follow its development;
- R 20: this is a grouping of major regions throughout the world<sup>7</sup>, which focuses on energy and climate change issues and was set up in the context of the Copenhagen conference (November 2009). The Congress should also follow its development.

#### **IV. New prospects for co-operation**

##### **1. Exchanges of information and best practice**

26. The exchanges of information between the Congress and the above organisations could be expanded by making more co-ordinated use of the possibilities offered by the websites of the Congress and these various European organisations.

27. The Chamber of Regions should also invite the leaders of these associations to present their work concerning the priority activities of the Congress. At the same time, the organisations should enable the Congress to present its work at their conferences. Exchanges of this kind already occur but could be organised on a more in-depth and more regular basis in order to establish a real "European network of inter-regional information".

##### **2. Conferences, seminars and hearings on issues of common interest**

28. Events of this kind have already taken place successfully but could be held more frequently, which would help to pool expertise and best practice. There are limits here, however. Budgetary and timetable constraints mean that the Congress is not able to accept all invitations to conferences or seminars issued by European associations. The Bureau must therefore set priorities in this area.

##### **3. Joint activities on priority issues: inter-regional and cross-border co-operation, regions with legislative powers**

29. As was the case with the working meetings on the draft Charter of Regional Democracy and then on the Reference Framework for Regional Democracy, in which several European associations were actively involved, think tanks involving interested organisations and the Congress could be convened to discuss issues of common interest, for instance cross-border co-operation with the AEBR and regions with legislative powers with the CALRE and REGLEG, etc. New types of synergy and working methods should be sought here by developing networking with the associations and institutes.

#### **V. Conclusions**

30. The associations and organisations representing European regions can offer the Chamber of Regions and the Congress a substantial level of know-how about regional issues. The Congress can obtain much information and expertise from these organisations.

---

<sup>7</sup> In particular, California, Ile-de-France, etc.

31. Their role in lobbying the European Union, in particular the Committee of the Regions, and European and international organisations should also be taken into account.

32. As an institutional platform, the Congress enables regional organisations – in particular those holding observer status – to express their views in its committees and, in clearly defined cases, during plenary sessions, when the issues addressed are appropriate.

33. The associations played a key part in the preparation of the draft of the European Charter of Regional Democracy. They provided political support for this draft charter adopted by the Congress and also contributed to the preparation of the Reference Framework for Regional Democracy.

34. As an official body within the Council of Europe, the Congress should be able to draw effectively on the expertise of these associations and their ability to mobilise efforts in promoting decentralisation and regionalisation in Europe. It is also necessary to identify innovative working methods that enable the Congress to publicise its own work more widely through them.

## APPENDIX

### **European associations representing the regions, foundations and other bodies of specific relevance to the Chamber of Regions**

#### **(General information)**

#### **1. Assembly of European Regions (AER)**

(granted observer status with the Congress on 1/6/1994)

The Assembly of European Regions was set up in 1985 and includes over 270 regions in 33 different countries and 16 inter-regional organisations. The decision-making bodies of the AER are the General Assembly<sup>8</sup>, comprising political representatives of the member regions, who meet once a year, and the political Bureau, which coordinates the activities of the thematic committees. The General Secretariat of the AER is based in Strasbourg (France). The AER also has offices in Brussels (Belgium) and Alba Iulia (Romania)<sup>9</sup>.

The aim of the AER is to offer a forum for inter-regional co-operation and to increase the regions' political influence within the European institutions. The AER, which acts as the voice of its members in the European institutions, seeks to promote the common interests of the regions by establishing networks and defining policy positions. It also encourages the pooling of experience and inter-regional co-operation projects. These activities are implemented by four committees (economy and regional development, social policy and public health, culture, education and youth) and two standing committees (institutional affairs and monitoring and evaluation).

Website: <http://www.aer.eu/>

#### **2. Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR)**

(granted observer status with the Congress on 1/6/1994)

The CEMR was founded in 1951 as the Council of European Municipalities and only became the Council of European Municipalities and Regions in 1984. It brings together not only local but also regional authorities in Europe. Its members are over 50 national associations of towns, municipalities and regions from 38 different countries. Together, these associations represent some 100,000 towns/cities and regions. The two main decision-making bodies of the CEMR are the Policy Committee and the Executive Bureau<sup>10</sup>. The President of the CEMR<sup>11</sup> and the other members of the presidency are elected by the Policy Committee for a three-year term. The CEMR also has nine vice-presidents.

---

<sup>8</sup> The Congress was represented at the last three General Assemblies:

- GA (Belfort, France, 26-27/11/2009): Ludmila SFIRLOAGA, President of the Chamber of Regions,
- GA (Tampere, Finland, 12-14/11/2008): Ludmila SFIRLOAGA, President of the Chamber of Regions,
- GA (Udine, Italy, 7-9/11/2007): Yavuz MILDON, President of the Chamber of Regions.

The Congress has also taken part in several meetings of the AER Bureau: Istanbul, Turkey, 7/09/2007, and Göteborg, Sept. 2009.

It also took part in the Black Sea Conference (Paris, 15/02/2010).

<sup>9</sup> The current president is Michèle SABBAN (France).

<sup>10</sup> The Congress is regularly represented at the annual meetings of the CEMR by the President of the Congress. In so far as the CEMR represents both local and regional authorities, its working relations with the Chamber of Regions have been less regular, except when a legal instrument on regional democracy (Congress Charter then "Framework of reference") was being prepared.

<sup>11</sup> The current president is Dr Michael HÄUPL, Austria.

Its mission is to safeguard, strengthen and protect the autonomy of local and regional authorities, in accordance with the European Charter of Local Self-Government. It promotes dialogue and the sharing of experience and co-operation between its members at not only European but also international level and supports twinning activities. Lastly, it acts as a "lobby" in the European law-making process for the benefit of local and regional authorities. To achieve its objectives, the CEMR organises conferences and has set up various working groups. It has a wide range of activities: North-South co-operation, local and regional democracy, sustainable development, equal opportunities, employment, energy, environment, governance, twinings, etc.

Website: <http://www.ccre.org/>

### 3. Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR)

(granted observer status with the Congress on 9/10/2007)

The CPMR was established in 1973 and comprises 161 regions from 28 countries. It has four main objectives:

- to reduce "peripherality" and thus foster the development of peripheral regions;
- to promote the maritime dimension and take advantage of the proximity of the sea through co-operation in joint projects;
- to enhance "proximity"; the CPMR promotes the joint interests of its member regions and focuses its activities on policies with a strong local and regional impact (EU regional policy, sustainable development, employment-training, transport, agriculture, fishing, research and innovation);
- to make the voice of the regions heard in the globalisation process, in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme, with the objective of defining and promoting the regional dimension of development strategies within states and continental or sub-continental entities.

The Conference comprises the General Assembly, which meets once a year to define the objectives and the budget of the Conference<sup>12</sup>. The Political Bureau meets twice a year to propose policy directions and implement the decisions taken by the General Assembly. The President is elected by the Political Bureau for two years<sup>13</sup>. There are six geographical commissions: the Atlantic Arc, Balkans/Black Sea, Islands, Inter-Mediterranean, Baltic Sea and North Sea commissions.

The aim of the CPMR is to make the European institutions aware of the need to take more account of the specific features of maritime territories when preparing European policies and legislation. Its geographical commissions help to establish partnerships, set up projects and monitor relations with the specialised services of the European Commission and its member states. It carries out expert studies, has adopted numerous opinions on regional policy and proposes new thrusts for regional policy as from 2013, taking account of issues such as globalisation and the impact of the financial and economic crisis on the regions. In a globalised context, the CPMR helps to position peripheral maritime regions in their immediate environment and on the international stage.

Website: <http://www.crpm.org/>

---

<sup>12</sup> Every year the Congress is invited to take part and has been represented at the last five general assemblies:

- 38<sup>th</sup> GA (Aberdeen, Scotland, 30/9-1/10 2010) João JARDIM, President of the Delegation of Portugal to the Congress,
- 37<sup>th</sup> GA (Göteborg, Sweden, 1-2/10/2009): Günther KRUG – Vice-President of the Congress,
- 36<sup>th</sup> GA (Bayonne, France, 1-3/10/2008): Ludmila SFIRLOAGA – President of the Chamber of Regions,
- 35<sup>th</sup> GA (Florence, Italy, 17-19/10/2007): Yavuz MILDON – President of the Chamber of Regions,
- 34<sup>th</sup> GA (Murcia, Spain, 25-27/10/2006): Yavuz MILDON – President of the Chamber of Regions.

<sup>13</sup> The current president is Mr Jean-Yves LE DRIAN, president of the Bretagne region, France.

#### 4. Association of European Border Regions (AEBR)

(granted observer status with the Congress on 1/6/1994)

The AEBR was founded in 1971 and covers some 100 border and cross-border regions, both within and outside the European Union. The internal organisation of the AEBR comprises the General Assembly<sup>14</sup>, and the Executive Committee, which appoints the Secretary General. The General Assembly elects the President<sup>15</sup> and the Executive Committee for a two-year term.

The AEBR represents the interests of border and cross-border regions at European and national level. Its fields of activity are spatial planning, cohesion policy and regional policy, transport, economy, innovation and research, tourism, environment and socio-cultural themes.

The AEBR speaks on behalf of border and cross-border regions in parliaments and national and international institutions. It initiates, supports and co-ordinates regional co-operation throughout Europe. Its objective is to offer solutions to border problems through the sharing of information and experience. The AEBR also disseminates information on cross-border issues, manages programmes, in particular those of the EU (INTERREG, PHARE, TACIS CBC, MEDA and CARDS), seeks funding and organises events relating to cross-border problems.

Website: <http://www.aebr.net/>

#### 5. Conference of European Regional Legislative Assemblies (CALRE)

(granted observer status with the Congress on 22/5/2003)

The CALRE is the Conference of European Regional Legislative Assemblies and was founded in 1997. The CALRE currently comprises 74 regions from eight countries (Germany, Austria, Belgium, Spain, Finland, Italy, Portugal and the United Kingdom). The Plenary Meeting of the CALRE<sup>16</sup> comprises the presidents of all the parliaments that belong to the Conference. The Standing Committee, which comprises eight presidents of regional parliaments, meets three times a year. A different country holds the chairmanship of the CALRE every year<sup>17</sup>.

CALRE was established because insufficient account was taken of the rules and regulations adopted by regional parliaments in European legislation. Its objectives are to strengthen its member regions, monitor European affairs, establish a network to deal with subsidiarity issues and to foster the exchange of information and good practices between regional legislative assemblies and European and national institutions. It also seeks to improve dialogue with European regional organisations and to bring Europe closer to its citizens through the legislative assemblies.

Website: <http://www.calre.be/>

---

<sup>14</sup> The Congress was represented at the last four general assemblies:

- GA (Dundalk, Ireland, 21-23 October 2010): Günter KRÜG (tbc)
- GA (Ghent, Belgium 5-7/11/2009): Karl-Heinz LAMBERTZ,
- GA (Plauen, Germany 16-18/10/2008): Karl-Heinz LAMBERTZ,
- GA (Lappeenranta, Finland, 13-15/09/2007): Jean-Paul HEIDER,
- GA (Pamplona, Spain, 23-24/11/2006): Yavuz MILDON.

<sup>15</sup> The current president is Karl-Heinz LAMBERTZ (Belgium), member of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities.

<sup>16</sup> The Congress is invited every year and was represented at the last four Plenary Meetings:

- 14<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session (Trento, Italy, 4-5 Oct. 2010): L. SFIRLOAGA, President of the Chamber of Regions
- 13<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session (Innsbruck, Austria, 19-20 Oct. 2009): G KRUG, Vice-President of the Congress,
- 12<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session (Bilbao, Basque Country, 2-4 Nov. 2008): Y MILDON, President of the Congress,
- 11<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session (Berlin, Germany, 21-23 Oct. 2007): Y MILDON, President of the Chamber of Regions.

<sup>17</sup> The current President (until the end of. 2010) is Giovanni KESSLER, President of the Council of the Autonomous Province of Trento (Italy). The president for 2011 will be Mr. Nazario PAGANO, President of the Regional Council of Abruzzo, Italy.

## 6. Conference of European Regions with Legislative Power (REGLEG)

The conference, the first session of which took place in Liège in 2000, seeks to raise the level of democratic participation of regions with legislative powers in EU affairs. At present there are 73 regions with legislative powers spread across eight EU member states (Germany, Austria, Belgium, Spain, Finland, Italy, Portugal and the United Kingdom) which have their own government and a directly elected parliament, and are responsible for the implementation of EC legislation.

The presidency of REGLEG is held by the President<sup>18</sup> of the region which hosts the annual conference<sup>19</sup>. The Co-ordination Committee, comprising between one and four regions, organises the annual conference and ensures the continuity of the network's activities.

The aim of REGLEG is to ensure that the role of regions with legislative power is fully acknowledged in the drafting of EU policy and legislation. It exerts continued pressure on the EU bodies to ensure that regions are directly consulted prior to the drafting of legislation. REGLEG also offers the Committee of the Regions regional administrations' expert assistance in monitoring the conformity of legislative proposals with the principle of subsidiarity. To this end, the REGLEG Co-ordination Committee prepares projects with the Committee of the Regions concerning the monitoring of subsidiarity. These projects are subsequently submitted to the member regions for their approval.

Website: <http://regleg.eu/>

## 7. European Foundation for the Sustainable Development of the Regions (FEDRE)

(granted observer status with the Congress on 1/3/2000)

The FEDRE, which was set up in 1996, has close contacts with the Congress. It is a permanent structure facilitating access to a network of promotion, exchange and economic, environmental and social partnerships. The Board comprises the President<sup>20</sup>, two vice-presidents and three members, and an Executive Secretary is responsible for the administration<sup>21</sup>. The FEDRE has a network of permanent experts and co-operates with the Congress, the United Nations Economic Committee for Europe, the different regions of Europe and with public and private economic actors, etc.

Its main activities are co-operation between the regions of Europe, the sustainable development of the regions of eastern, central and western Europe and of the south-east of the Mediterranean.

Website: <http://www.fedre.org/>

---

<sup>18</sup> The current president is Marcelino IGLESIAS RICO, the President of the Government of Aragon (Spain).

<sup>19</sup> Over the last few years the Congress was represented at the REGLEG conferences:

- 10th Conference (Turin, Italy, 5-7 Nov. 2009): Ludmila SFIRLOAGA, President of the Chamber of Regions,
- 8th Conference (Barcelona, Spain, 15-16 Nov. 2007): Y MILDON,
- 7th Conference (Cardiff, Wales, 16-17 Nov. 2006): J-C Van CAUWENBERGHE,
- 6th Conference (Munich, Germany, 21-22 Nov. 2005): J-C Van CAUWENBERGHE.

<sup>20</sup> The President is Claude HAEGI, former President of the Congress.

<sup>21</sup> The Congress is invited to the statutory meetings of the FEDRE and to the conferences it organises. It has a close working relationship with the Council of Europe, particularly within the context of the NALAS network (to which the FEDRE has given its steady support since it was first founded).

## **8. Association of Working Communities of the Alpine Regions (ARGEALP)** (granted observer status with the Congress on 1/6/1994)

The Association of Working Communities was set up in 1972 and its members now include 10 länder, provinces, regions and cantons of Austria, Italy, Switzerland and Germany. The internal organisation of ArgeAlp comprises the Conference of Heads of Government and the President<sup>22</sup>. The association, which has several thematic committees, is active in several fields: the preservation and development of the quality of life, the economy of the Alpine area and job creation<sup>23</sup>.

Website: <http://www.argealp.org/>

## **9. Assembly of European Wine-Producing Regions (AREV)**

The AREV is an off-shoot of the Assembly of European Regions. It covers 65 wine-growing regions in 17 countries. Its aim is to voice the opinions of both regional executives and of the representatives of recognised quality wine producing areas and wine-producing areas in general. The Conference of European Wine Producing Regions (CERV), which was set up in Bourg-sur-Gironde in Aquitaine in 1988, drew up new statutes (Marsala, Sicily), and officially became the Assembly of European Wine-Producing regions (AREV) in 1994. Its internal organisation comprises the President<sup>24</sup>, Vice-Presidents and Secretary General. Its political representation is provided by international offices, while its professional representation is provided by the European Wine Trade Council, which is responsible for drafting texts that are subsequently submitted to the plenary assembly for approval. The political and professional representation of these regions enables the wine industry to express its points of view. The AREV makes representations to all the institutions and bodies directly or indirectly responsible for European or worldwide wine policy and participates in all affairs relating to the wine industry<sup>25</sup>.

Website: <http://www.arev.org/>

## **10. Centre d'Observation Européen des Régions (CŒUR)**

The CŒUR, which was set up by Denis de Rougemont in 1975, operates under a contract with the University of Geneva and several other universities (Strasbourg, for instance) and institutes in Europe. Its president is Mr Joan Vallve, former Catalan minister and former MEP, and it has a multinational Bureau. Its recent work for the Congress and the CDLR, the Committee of the Regions, the Assembly of European Regions, the Association of European Border Regions, the French cross-border co-operation agency (MOT) and the European Association of State Territorial Representatives, etc, has covered:

- cross-border co-operation,
- territorial governance,
- major crises,
- regional identity and regional cultures,
- frontier labour forces,
- European cultural policies, etc.

---

<sup>22</sup> The head of regional government currently chairing the conference is Dr Luis DURNWALDER.

<sup>23</sup> The Congress has ad hoc working relations with ARGEALP.

<sup>24</sup> Jean-Paul BACHY, President of the Champagne-Ardenne Region.

<sup>25</sup> This association does not have observer status and only has intermittent working relations with the Congress.

## **11. European Institute of Public Administration – European Centre for the Regions (EIPA-ECR)**

(granted observer status with the Congress on 1/3/1997)

The Centre was set up in 1996 following an agreement between the European Institute of Public Administration and the regional government of Catalonia. It holds seminars, carries out comparative studies of administrations and encourages co-operation and the pooling of experience between the different administrations. Its three fields of competence are:

- the political influence of regions and towns in the European context (including the changes that take place in administration and pressure groups);
- multi-level governance (the institute carries out research into the best ways of ensuring participation in decision-making processes, the effective incorporation and monitoring of subsidiarity);
- regional development in the EU and the identification of mechanisms and good practices to ensure the competitiveness and prosperity of the regions in the European environment;

The institute works for various European institutions, states and regions of Europe in developing integration processes that have an impact at regional level<sup>26</sup>.

Website: <http://www.eipa.nl/en/antenna/Barcelona/>

## **12. Institute of the Regions of Europe (IRE)**

The IRE, which was established in 2004, is an economic and scientific institution whose headquarters are in Salzburg (Austria). The members and main patrons of the IRE, in addition to Austria, are regions, towns, municipalities and a large number of business enterprises. The internal structure comprises the Board of Directors, the President<sup>27</sup>, the Advisory Board and the Co-operation Partners. The General Assembly takes place in Salzburg once a year.

The IRE seeks to promote economic and political relations between the different regions and municipalities in Europe and to strengthen contacts with the European Union and its institutions. The Institute of the regions of Europe is a partner of the EU Committee of the Regions and of the Congress. It is a platform for information, exchanges and advice. It also seeks to create links between the regions and helps them to set up joint projects. As a research institute, it also carries out studies on subjects which are of relevance to the regions of Europe and organises seminars and conferences<sup>28</sup>.

Website: <http://www.ire.or.at/en/en.htm>

## **13. Two Euroregions set up on the initiative of the Congress**

The Euroregions established by the Congress (the Adriatic and Black Sea Euroregions) in 2006 and 2008 are continuing to develop. Their aim is to facilitate exchanges of knowledge and experience at European level. The local and regional authorities in these geographical areas have initiated and implemented a series of specific co-operation projects to promote social and economic development, territorial cohesion and cultural exchanges.

---

<sup>26</sup> For the time being, relations with the Congress are very limited.

<sup>27</sup> The President is Dr Franz SCHAUSBERGER, who is also the Director of the Institute.

<sup>28</sup> Every year, the Congress takes part in the annual conference/General Assembly in Salzburg.

- The Adriatic Euroregion was established in June 2006 and now has 24 local and regional authority members from Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania and Greece. The most recent authority to join the Euroregion was the prefecture of Thesprotia in Greece. The Euroregion's headquarters are in Pula in Croatia. Its programme of activities covers areas such as transport, fishing, agriculture, environmental protection, sustainable tourism and cultural and social co-operation. The accession of local and regional authorities from Slovenia and San Marino could provide additional useful partners for the Euroregion. The Adriatic Euroregion's last general assembly was held in Split (Croatia) on 22 October 2009. During the assembly, Mr Ivan JAKOVČIĆ, President of the Croatian region of Istria, was re-elected President of the Euroregion for a two-year term. The Euroregion has expressed the wish to change its status to a European Grouping of Territorial Co-operation (EGTC) and to encourage the establishment of a European Union Adriatic-Ionian strategy.

The Euroregion prepared five projects in 2009 involving human capital in enterprises, the integrated management of coastlines (maritime traffic, fishing, culture and tourism), a network of protected cultural heritage sites, Adriatic broadcasting and an audiovisual network.

- The Black Sea Euroregion was established in September 2008 and now has 14 local and regional authority members from Armenia, Bulgaria, Georgia, Moldova and Romania. It held its first general assembly in Constanta in November 2008 and the second in Varna in March 2009. The headquarters are in Constanta in Romania and Mr Daniel CONSTANTINESCU, President of the Constanta region, is the Euroregion's President. The accession of local and regional authorities from Turkey, Ukraine and Russia could provide useful additional partners for the Euroregion.

The Euroregion prepared four projects in 2009, on environmental protection, port networks, sustainable tourism and exchanges between cultures and traditions.