

**Deuxième Conférence
des Présidents de Régions
à pouvoir législatif**

Palais des Congrès
L I È G E
15 & 16
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**SECOND PRESIDENTIAL CONFERENCE OF THE REGIONS
WITH LEGISLATIVE POWER
LIEGE
15 NOVEMBER 2001**

**Towards the reinforced role of the Regions with legislative power
within the European Union**

Resolution

On the initiative of the Minister President of the Walloon Region, the presidents of 52 Regions with legislative power of the European Union, or their representatives, met in Liege on 15 November 2001 : Abruzzo, Aland, Aragón, Baden-Württemberg, Bayern, Berlin, Bolzano-Südtirol, Brandenburg, Bremen, Bruxelles-Capitale, Calabria, Canarias, Catalunya, Communauté Française de Belgique, Comunidad Foral de Navarra, Deutschsprachige Gemeinschaft, Emilia-Romagna, Euskadi, Extremadura, Galicia, Hessen, Islas Baleares, Lazio, Lombardia, Madeira, Marche, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Niederösterreich, Niedersachsen, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Piemonte, Principado de Asturias, Provincia Trento, Puglia, Rheinland-Pfalz, Saarland, Sachsen-Anhalt, Salzburg, Sardegna, Schleswig-Holstein, Scotland, Sicilia, Tirol, Toscana, Trentino-Alto Adige / Südtirol, Umbria, Veneto, Vlaanderen, Vorarlberg, Wales, Wallonie and Wien.

With a view to the declaration on the Future of the European Union which the Heads of State and Government will adopt in Brussels/Laeken at the end of the Belgian Presidency, their debate concerned the reinforced role of the Regions with legislative power within the European Union.

They adopted the following resolution:



The European Union's driving force has always been the reconciliation among the peoples of Europe and their lasting co-operation in maintaining peace, respecting Human Rights and basic freedom, and ensuring prosperity throughout its territory.

The project of European integration has been and still is a success. But recent history and the tragic events of 11 September 2001 on the one hand, the socio-economic and institutional developments within the EU and the forthcoming enlargement on the other hand, call for a reorientation of the Union.

Accordingly, the Presidents of the Regions with legislative power endorse the content of the "Political declaration of 7 constitutional regions" on the reinforcement of the role of constitutional regions within the European Union, signed in Brussels on 28 May, 2001 and appended to the present resolution.

Therefore the Regions with legislative power welcome the current debate on the Future of the European Union. The main objectives are to promote the European integration process in a flexible way, to

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enhance the transparency, the accountability, the effectiveness, the proximity of the European decision-making process and the democratic legitimacy of the EU. These make it essential to involve all the subnational policy levels, including the Regions with legislative power. In fact, regions should be given the opportunity to incorporate their expertise into a European Union where all levels of governance shape the European policy jointly. Moreover, on the basis of their specific characteristics and structures, the Regions with legislative power express their demand to have a place within the European decision-making forums and to participate actively and directly in the European decision-making process.

The citizens of Europe also wish the European Union to be more transparent. Wherever they live, they should be able to easily identify which policy area is covered by which authority – local, regional, national or European – and who is politically accountable for what responsibilities. It will not be possible without clarification of the objectives and identification of the players and their respective powers, respecting the identities and the frameworks of the national constitutional systems.

In this regard, a better Governance for Europe is likely to increase the regional participation in the implementation of the European Union policies. The White Paper on Governance can therefore be considered as an interesting basis of discussion.

Member States have a responsibility to ensure that their regions are directly involved in the discussion process on the Future of the Union. In addition, since the participation of the regions in the European decision-making process will increase the democratic legitimacy of the European Union, it is therefore necessary that, in its functioning, the European Union responds to their specific role.

In the scope of the debate on the Future of Europe, the Presidents of the Regions with legislative power ask to consider the lack of regional participation to the EU decision-making process as a theme to be addressed by the Declaration of Brussels/Laeken as well as by the forthcoming Intergovernmental Conference. They consider that the role of the regions is a part of the questions on the Future of the Union presented by the European Council of Nice, i.e. a more precise delimitation of powers, reflecting the principle of subsidiarity, the status of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, the clarification and the simplification of the treaties as well as the institutional architecture of the EU.

Regions with legislative power pronounce themselves again in favour of a more precise delimitation of powers, on the basis of the principles of the EU's restricted prerogatives, subsidiarity, proportionality and the obligation to respect the national identity of the Member States.

These principles must constitute the guiding principles to establish and monitor a more precise delimitation of powers within the Union in order to ensure the legal security and stability which are essential to the good functioning of a system based on the complementarity and the collaboration of the power levels concerned. Indeed, the regional dimension has to be taken into account in the debate on the delimitation of powers.

Also, in order to develop answers to the new institutional architecture of the EU, it is necessary to consider the interactions of the regions with all the European institutions. In this context, the Regions with legislative powers wish that the mandate of the Convention includes the theme of the role of the Regions with legislative power within the three categories of powers: legislative, executive and judicial.

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Notably, consideration should be given to a right of direct appeal to the European Court of Justice in case their powers are violated, while respecting each national Constitution.

In the same spirit, the Regions with legislative power consider that the Committee of the Regions must have a reinforced role within the decision-making process. They nevertheless believe that its current shape and institutional framework do not allow it to meet the needs and the expectations of all the subnational entities it should represent.

Finally, with regard to the Convention the Regions with legislative power expect the Heads of State and Government to involve them as well. They believe they can bring a real added value by their knowledge of the diversity in social, economic and cultural fields, which represents the richness of Europe, its force and the foundation of its cohesion. Considering that all possible means should be applied to reinforce the democratic legitimacy of the European Union, the Convention should reflect the views of all politically elected actors that can contribute to this.

Therefore, they consider that the composition of the national delegations at the Convention, limited to one government representative and two national parliaments' representatives, is unsatisfactory and they reiterate their request for direct representation of the Regions with legislative power.

In addition, the Presidents of the Regions with legislative power ask all Governments to include regional representatives in the national delegations at the Convention.

In parallel, the Committee of the Regions should be allowed to participate in the Convention as a full member. The Presidents are convinced that the regions with legislative powers have a legitimate place within the delegation of the Committee.



The Regions with legislative power will jointly organise the follow-up of the proceedings of the Convention. They will continue to work together in the future, particularly as regards their contribution to the next Intergovernmental Conference. Indeed, some of them play a role in the ratification process of the treaties.

The Presidents of the Regions with legislative power ask the Minister-President of the Walloon Region to transmit the present resolution to the President of the Council with a view to the debate on the Future of the Union at the European Council of Brussels/Laeken.