SECOND FOGAR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING  
(FOURUM OF GLOBAL ASSOCIATIONS OF REGIONS)  
8 FEBRUARY 2008 – COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS, BRUSSELS, BELGIUM  

- MINUTES -

Participants

See list attached

INTRODUCTION: Welcome

Claudio Martini welcomed the participants and congratulated Mr Van den Brande on his election as President of the Committee of the Regions. He thanked him for the technical and logistical organisation of the FOGAR Executive Committee meeting, and presented the networks attending. He then gave the floor to Mr Van den Brande.

SESSION I: Message from the President of the Committee of the Regions, Luc Van den Brande, and presentation of the Committee of the Regions by its Secretary General, Gerhard Stahl

Mr Van den Brande began his message by lending his support to FOGAR, because he believes it is important to create a multi-level system of governance at global level. He shared the idea that the regions should have a role within the international framework, particularly regarding development aid. The regions must help build a world of peace, security and prosperity. The role of the regions is essential, notably in the promotion of harmonised and sustainable development. More widely, central governments must allow local and regional authorities to develop international activities. The Committee of the Regions (CoR) is committed to helping strengthen the regions’ role in this context. It is promoting decentralised cooperation within and beyond the European Union. It is supporting the decentralisation process in third countries, which is helping to promote democracy. It is vital to develop complementary actions and policies among all levels of public authorities, from the international to the local level, as well as with civil society.

Mr Van den Brande then presented the CoR’s priorities for the next two years. The idea of multi-level governance will be promoted in the various areas of CoR work. Firstly, it will follow the debates on budget reform very closely and will take an active part so that it meets the challenges posed by issues such as globalisation, climate change, energy, migration, etc. In this context the topic of climate change will be a priority for the CoR. Regional and local authorities are at the heart of the European strategy for growth and jobs (Lisbon strategy). This is why the CoR has also created the Lisbon Monitoring Platform in order to support partnerships and the regions’ participation in the implementation of this strategy.

The next priority concerns cohesion policy and in particular the implementation of European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (GECTs), which the CoR is committed to promoting in order to improve and facilitate territorial cooperation. Such cooperation will also be pursued beyond the EU’s borders and the CoR
promises to act in order to make regional and local cooperation a reality within EU neighbourhood policy. The regions have much to contribute in this field as a result of their European experience over the last twenty years.

Mr Martini thanked Mr Van den Brande for his message and support, and proposed that he should participate in the debates organised by FOGAR, the CPMR, the UNDP and the other partners involved in the Second Convention for a Regional and Local Approach to Development, which will take place in Tangiers from 12 to 14 May 2008. Mr Van den Brande accepted this proposal.

Mr Stahl, Secretary General, then presented the CoR’s international activities.

*International working groups*
Three groups exist, on the Western Balkans, Croatia and Turkey. The topics dealt with by these groups include institutional capacity building and structural fund management. This work had previously been done with the countries that became members of the EU in 2004 and 2007.

*Neighbourhood policy*
This is a vital instrument for exporting stability beyond the Union’s borders. The CoR has long been active in the Balkans and in the Mediterranean.

*The Northern Dimension*
In the Baltic area, the CoR has also been active through its participation in the Union’s Northern Dimension Policy. It is cooperating with regional and local authorities from Russia on sustainable development, trade and environmental protection.

*Decentralised cooperation:*
The Committee of the Regions is trying to gather information on local and regional authorities’ activities in this field, even those known as the “little regions”. This may help to create synergies. Coordination increases the impact of action. Mr Stahl then cited the case of Ireland, where, in order to be really effective, action had had to be organised at local and regional level, with support from civil society. This is about promoting democracy from the bottom up. The CoR is also interested in the issue of cities’ diplomacy. Lastly, he mentioned the CoR’s interest in the creation of a platform of European local and regional organisations working in the field of decentralised cooperation.

*The international dimension of the Lisbon strategy*
Discussions have been held with Chinese, Russian, Indian and Brazilian representatives during CoR Open Days in October 2007, because they are very keen to know how the regions and cities contribute to the implementation of the Union’s Lisbon Strategy on growth and jobs. The internal market is taken for granted in the EU, but this is not the case in China for example, where there is no open market between the provinces. Cohesion policy has been an instrument to prepare for the internal market—the aim has been to provide structural funds to offset the negative effects of the opening of markets—which interests the authorities in several countries outside the Union.

**SESSION II: The role of the regions in the EU’s external strategies: meeting with European Commission representatives**

*Eneko Landaburu, Director General, Directorate General for External Relations, European Commission*

Mr Martini warmly thanked Mr Stahl for his presentation and gave the floor to Mr Landaburu. But he firstly stressed that the aim of the morning session was to hear what European Commission representatives had to say on “the role of the regions in the EU’s external strategies” and exchange of views with them.

Mr Landaburu began his presentation by saying that the EU’s external outlook is very positive. Original mechanisms have been established, which have at last managed to bring peace and prosperity to the continent after a long history of war. The aim was to reconcile history and geography, as Bronislaw Geremek has said. The member states are the key to the Union’s development. They have launched the single
currency, the internal market and enlargement with support from the Commission, and it should be stressed that a role has been given to local and regional authorities beyond just financial solidarity.

The EU’s internal successes have furthermore had consequences at external level. For example, the EU is the largest trading bloc and the biggest donor of development aid, and it regularly intervenes to resolve conflicts. Its action in the field of sustainable development is also pioneering.

The EU has managed to develop a regional economic development model that goes hand in hand with real sensitivity to social concerns. It is now essential to export this model. Its efficiency, in a global and unequal world, seems to offer the only way of ensuring harmonious development, peace and prosperity in the long term, in Europe and beyond. The aim is to reap the benefits of globalisation while limiting the risks, in order to defend the Union’s citizens and values. This is a very ambitious project.

But the major problem is that, while the Union increasingly exists on the international stage, it is still not a political actor on this global stage. The community method does not apply to external relations, and there is no sharing of sovereignty in this field.

It is important for the European Commission to develop an external relations doctrine, and it must become a laboratory of ideas and proposals.

What should be the role of the regions in this context?

The world cannot be changed without the regions or civil society. Only they can mobilise all stakeholders in order to deliver the solidarity mechanisms needed in order to export the Union’s values.

For example, in the EU’s Mediterranean policy, cooperation just between states has shown its limits. It can establish structures to help boost economic growth, but without regional authorities it is impossible to touch people’s lives. Regional and national governance rules should be introduced to enable the regions and local authorities to work together. This is what is proposed in the European neighbourhood policy, part of which is devoted to cooperation between sub-national authorities.

In Latin America, states’ management capability is noted as being good, and there are healthy macro-economic indicators. However, this has not reduced inequalities within societies and, ultimately, if democracy does not provide people with bread on their table, they will prefer tougher regimes that guarantee a certain level of economic wellbeing (ECLAC study). This is a real danger in the long term and a solution will have to be found. To achieve this, it is necessary to work with all society, and regional capabilities must therefore be mobilised as drivers as change. This is already notably being achieved through the URB-AL Programme, which is now open to the regions.

Mr Landaburu concluded his speech by stressing more than ever that the European project is still a topical issue. However, it cannot be successfully developed solely by national and European public authorities, and the regions must have their role. It will be necessary to build a fairer multipolar world, and to do this, regional authorities’ efficiency and ability to inject democracy will be necessary. For their part, the regions must help to mobilise Europe so that it can be a global player.

Debate
Mr Jardim has long been an observer of the EU’s efforts to implement regional policy and he also stressed the interest of the EU’s Outermost Regions. He profusely thanked Mr Landaburu for these remarks. However, he wondered whether the regions now have the constitutional and legal capacity to act at international level.

Ms Wohl said that the EU’s philosophy is not shared by all and that in certain geographical areas it is difficult for regions to work together. She argued for a more pragmatic approach that would entail asking the regions what they need from their neighbours in order to develop.

Mr Gizard emphasised that Latin American and African state partners had approached FOGAR to discuss the role of the regions. He also mentioned the next Forum of Mediterranean Regional and Local Authorities, which will be organised in Marseille and in which FOGAR will take part, as well as the General Assembly of
the CPMR’s Balkans and Black Sea Commission, which will also take place at the end of June in Rhodes. All this reassures him that FOGAR meets a real need among public authorities who want to be able to discuss and debate with the regions globally.

Mr Teghouam said priority must be given to promoting democracy before funding and that the Union must act accordingly.

Mr Stahl noted that certain European regions have opened offices in countries outside the Union (notably in China for example), and seem to be acting like states. He asked whether DG RELEX had done any research on this phenomenon.

Mr Martini presented the Second Convention for a Regional and Local Approach to Development, which will take place in Tangiers, and repeated his invitation to Mr Landaburu, who had already participated in the first Convention in Marseille. He dwelt on the fact that Europe is perceived extremely positively from outside and that it is widely criticised internally. He considered that the work with other regions of the world will help people become less Eurocentric and more positive about the EU’s achievements and the need to transfer them.

Mr Landaburu said it is vital to use the territorial dimension to liberate citizens’ energies (economic, social and cultural). Some regions of course have greater capabilities than others. This is a debate that should be pursued in the discussions.

**Dirk Ahner, Directorate General for Regional Policy, European Commission**

Mr Ahner presented European regional policy, stressing that while it is an internal EU policy, there are some external developments. The policy works at two levels: firstly to support the poorest European regions that are lagging furthest behind in development in comparison to the European average, and then to facilitate necessary structural adjustment in all EU regions. Actions are mainly run via investment in infrastructure and human resources, which are key elements of regional policy.

It is an integrated policy with some actions run in specific territories, with a multidisciplinary approach. The policy is also subject to conditions: certain rules are set, with which the different partners must comply. It is delivered via multi-level partnerships. Over 77% of programmes are designed and delivered by the regions themselves, and they are the key partners. It is also a long-term policy, because it is programmed over several years, with the new programming period running from 2007 to 2013 for example.

The last key point concerns co-funding, so it really is a responsibility that is shared by the European level and national and sub-national levels, which has a major leverage effect. For example, for each euro made available by the EU, between one and four euros are provided by other partners. This furthermore ensures a leverage effect by helping to mobilise all partners.

Mr Ahner continued by saying that regional policy also concerns cooperation between border regions within the Union or in major basins. It furthermore includes cooperation with EU’s external border regions, which are known as “neighbours”. The aim is to help European border regions work together with their neighbours, including those located near the Union’s Outermost Regions. The Commission is currently thinking about strengthening transnational cooperation (in the major basins, i.e. the Atlantic, the Mediterranean, the Balkans, etc.).

There is another theme that is currently at the centre of DG Regio’s reflections. This is the notion of territorial cohesion, which is part of the Lisbon Treaty that should enter into force when ratified by the member states. This concept should be defined more clearly and its consequences for the regions and their cooperation examined. Publication of the Green Paper and a public consultation on this theme is planned for September this year, and Mr Ahner invited the participants to take part.

**Debate**

Mr Jardim dwelt on the principle of territorial cohesion and stressed that it should take into account the transport and telecommunications issues.
Ms Wohl said that some parts of the world have no regional representation and she asked for the EU’s help in this area to help regions to develop.

Mr Maitia explained that the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) is regularly asked to transfer its experience of cooperation, particularly by African regions. He said it would be useful for the Union to support such initiatives.

Mr Ahner responded by stressing that outermost regions and/or those with a permanent handicap are still a priority for regional policy. He said that future developments in regional policy must give serious consideration to the international level, but for the time being few resources are available.

Neighbourhood policy does not have the same philosophy or the same objectives as internal regional policy, but this is an area of work for the future. The aim is not to export our models such as they exist—this would not work—but to propose exchanges of experience and benchmarking between regions within and outside the Union.

_Bernard Petit, Deputy Director General, Directorate General for Development, European Commission_

Mr Petit began his presentation by saying that over the last two years, the theme of development and the Millennium Development Goals have become central issues, encapsulating the challenges of globalisation facing the world. Only a coherent and effective development policy can help bring security, stability and prosperity to all.

In this context, Europe is particularly committed and ambitious. It is the biggest donor and wants to help increase global aid even more, and above all make it more effective. These points are furthermore reflected in the European Consensus on Development of December 2005 as well as the Paris Declaration.

This year will be crucial for development. The Millennium Goals are currently at a mid-term stage (they should be implemented by 2015), and two major events will take place this year: the Accra conference in Ghana (September 2008), which is the third high-level forum on aid effectiveness, and the Doha conference (December 2008), where development funding will be discussed. The EU must be particularly ambitious as far as both of these events are concerned.

In this context, in early April the Commission will publish a Communication aiming to rally the member states around two points: the need to honour promises made (in terms of measurable objectives and quality), and to go beyond what has been agreed, in order to take account of the major challenges of the day, such as climate change, which will certainly affect development policy in coming years.

As far as the Europeans’ measurable development aid objectives are concerned (0.56% of GNI in 2010 and 0.7% in 2015), the EU has until now respected its commitments (notably via debt cancellation schemes), but this effort must be maintained and the challenge now lies in the EU’s capacity to find new budget resources to guarantee growth in the quantity of aid. Mr Petit added that a multitude of projects does not constitute a strategy, and that the way this aid is delivered should be thoroughly reviewed at global level. Efforts should be made to avoid an increase in the number of donors so as to avoid swamping partner countries’ governments, to encourage—when national conditions are favourable—the use of budgetary aid, to increase the predictability of aid, and to encourage the division of work.

He then mentioned the joint EU-Africa strategy, which is of strategic importance, particularly with regard to China’s current role in Africa. Moreover, the Union would like to launch an EU-Africa-China “trialogue”. This Europe-Africa strategy should give a greater role to local authorities and civil society, and put more emphasis on the issue of climate change.

In this range of EU priorities, there is a large place for the regions, both as partners and donors. The EU has sought to boost its support to non-state actors and local authorities through the launch of a new thematic programme called “Non-state actors and local authorities in development”, which aims to support local authorities and non-state actors in order to strengthen their capabilities in both the South and the North. Similarly, local authorities can access European finance under the EU’s geographical cooperation programmes (the European Development Fund, Latin America, Asia, etc.). Mr Petit regretted that, despite
the fact that a high number of regions are involved in development aid, their presence in ACP countries is limited (although several cooperation projects exist, notably with Latin America). There is great scope for progress here.

He added that the Commission is drawing up a strategy to support the local development process through improved governance, the promotion of decentralisation and territorial development. This will be one of the priorities of the French Presidency and the theme of the European Development Days (EDD), which will take place in Strasbourg next November. A public consultation exercise will be launched in March on this subject and the regions are strongly urged to participate in this consultation as well as the EDD in November.

Lastly, he mentioned that the Commission is exploring three new methods of coordinating the action of European local authorities and those of developing countries:

- A platform for local and regional authorities working in the development field
  Various networks exist and they too often work in parallel to one another. The aim here is to encourage networks to work together for greater effectiveness and to become—together—the European Commission’s discussion partners on the theme of development;

- A marketplace for decentralised cooperation
  The idea is to match supply and demand for decentralised cooperation (easier identification of partners) by establishing a marketplace system;

- Twinning
  The aim is to draw inspiration from practices already employed by the Enlargement and Education and Culture DGs. The goal of twinning arrangements is firstly to strengthen regional and local authorities’ institutional capability (notably by sending European staff on visits, institutional twinning), and secondly to promote exchanges between people (cultural twinning) in order to help citizens from regions in the North and the South get to know one another better.

Debate
Mr Intxaurraga wondered how the networks of regions can support their own member regions so that they can be more effective regarding certain issues, such as sustainable development, bearing in mind that nrg4SD has member regions from both developed and developing countries. The work within FOGAR should contribute to this.

Mr Mattia said that African regions would like to be able to use European experience of cross-border cooperation in their continent.

Mr Nuttall spoke about the very large number of partners and projects, which diminishes aid effectiveness. He hoped that FOGAR would make this aid more coordinated and effective.

Ms Mujica said that the decentralisation process is becoming important in Chile and it would be useful for relevant reflections to be organised in cooperation with neighbouring countries. She therefore requested support for an open database on past projects and analysis.

Mr Petit stressed the need to work with the regions, because they have the expertise needed by regions in developing countries. 2008 will be a crucial year for the relationship between member states, the EU and the regions, and it will culminate in the organisation of the EDD in November. It is hoped that there will be proposals from the regions.

SESSION III: Discussion with Mr Antonio Vigilante, Representative of the Coordinator of the United Nations to the European Union, UNDP Liaison Office, Brussels

Mr Vigilante opened the session by emphasising the credibility of the local democratic process and the absolute need to mobilise all actors in order to achieve the Millennium Goals, including civil society, states
and local and regional authorities. He requested FOGAR’s support for such mobilisation and explained that this has already happened in Latin America with useful Knowledge Fairs.

He then proposed two concrete themes for collaboration between the UNDP and FOGAR.

The first concerns a project that the UNDP Brussels Office is implementing with six other UN agencies, including the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), on the theme of migration flows, and the link between migrants’ places of departure and arrival in particular. The UNDP Brussels Office would like to organise a Knowledge Fair on this subject and, in the next two or three years, make some political recommendations on it. It would like FOGAR’s help to identify good practice within the regions.

Mr Vigilante also asked FOGAR, as a coordinator of networks, to introduce a systematic approach to the expertise that exists in the regions (regarding partnership organisation, auditing rules, project management, evaluation, etc.) and make this available in the programmes and themes developed by the UN. Accordingly, he suggested that joint responses should be formulated by developed country regions to the requests made by a given territory, by creating a demand support and management platform.

**Debate**
Ms Wohl expressed the Northern Forum’s interest in the migration theme.

Mr Moya said that the UN had already launched a programme on the theme of migration three or four years ago, and that Andalusia had made its good practice available at the time. It would be interesting to recover this information.

Mr Vigilante stipulated that the new programme will be specifically focused on places of departure and arrival and that it will of course take the results of the previous study into account.

### SESSION IV: FOGAR Committee meeting

**FOGAR’s statutes**
The General Secretariat presented a version of the Charter that includes the proposals for changes that were presented by the various networks that are members of the Committee. As it stands, the document has some contradictory aspects and is tabled for debate.

During the initial phase of network consolidation, it is important to keep the simplest and most comprehensible format possible.

Mr Martini suggested several points on which a consensus is emerging:
- The potential members are geographical, thematic or cultural associations, and they must be national or international networks. They must be networks of regions, although they can include some cities, as long as this does not alter the fundamental nature of the network in question;
- The General Assembly will meet at least every two years;
- the Committee members must either be currently elected political representatives of the network concerned or the highest administrative authority of the network who has been duly given a mandate by the network’s political representatives.

He also proposed that until 2010, when the Charter will be revised, the administrative and political structure should remain as simple as possible: a president, a secretary general, and one or two vice-presidents. He also said that the provisions relating to the thematic networks are of course still valid (IT4ALL monitors information society-related issues, and nrg4SD monitors those related to sustainable development).

The members agreed with this proposal: a simplified Charter until 2010, when the statutes must be revised, the priority currently being to mobilise new members. Mr Intxaurraga nevertheless wanted a certain geographical balance to be respected in the political representation (with the FOGAR president and vice-president coming from different regions of the world). It was also proposed that the Marseille Declaration should be appended to the FOGAR statutes. Furthermore, Ms Mujica wanted civil society to be rapidly further involved in the work of the network.
A new simplified version of the Charter will be sent out to the members by email. The Charter will be adopted in Tangiers. It is vital for FOGAR members attending on this occasion to be duly given a mandate to sign the document.

**Location of the network headquarters**

The finalisation of the statutes also depends on the location of the organisation’s headquarters. Mr Gizard presented the current options. Two cities have expressed their interest: Geneva and Lisbon. The exact conditions proposed will be examined rapidly by the General Secretariat, which has made an appointment with the two cities. Ms Wohl felt that there should first be discussion between the members on the precise objectives of the network, and a city could then be chosen. She said that a major objective was to promote the regions vis-à-vis UN agencies, so cities such as Geneva or New York should be given priority consideration.

**Network funding**

Following on from the previous discussion, the Secretary General said that the EU is the biggest provider of development aid and supporter of territorial policies, and that it is very often necessary to be based in an EU country in order to be able to apply for European funds.

He added that for 2008, additional voluntary dues paid by CPMR member regions will no doubt total between €100,000 and €120,000, which will enable FOGAR to function. Mr Gizard appealed to the member networks to start contributing immediately to FOGAR’s funding. Dues of between €1,000 and €10,000 do not represent an enormous sum for each of the networks, but they do help demonstrate everyone’s involvement.

For 2009 and in the medium term; it seems clear that the dues paid to FOGAR by its members will not enable the network to establish itself durably. Contacts are currently being made with various European Commission DGs to examine possible alternative sources of finance. A financial overview will be presented at the Committee meeting in late October 2008.

**Second International Convention for a Regional and Local Approach to Development**

Marie-Ange Orihuela presented the Convention’s provisional agenda and proposed various speeches that could be made by the member networks during the three days of meetings.

Opening session:
Mr Benallal, President of the Tangier-Tétouan Region;
Mr Martini, President of the CPMR and FOGAR.
Session 3:
nrg4SD and the Northern Forum on theme of the environment;
Guadeloupe Region and ZICOSUR on the theme of natural disaster management;
AIRF and OLAGI on the theme of economic development (training, relations with universities);
The nrg4SD network was asked to chair the meeting on sustainable development.

The proposals were accepted by the members attending.

The AEBR will send a proposal on its participation. The networks are furthermore invited to make proposals before the end of February if they would like to make a presentation at the workshops on 13 May 2008.

The session was brought to a close by Mr Martini, who thanked all of the participants and looked forward to seeing them again in Tangiers on 12 to 14 May 2008.
LIST OF THE FOGAR DELEGATION

FOGAR President:
Claudio MARTINI, President of Tuscany Region (Italy), President of the CPMR

AEBR (Association of European Border Regions)
Mr François MAÏTIA, Vice-President, Vice-President of Aquitaine Region, France
Mr Martín GUILLERMO RAMÍREZ, Secretary General

AIRF (Association Internationale des Régions Francophones)
Mr Bouamor TAGHOUAN, Conseiller régional de la Région Rabat Salé Zemmour Zaer, Parlementaire, Ancien Ministre de l’Equipement du Gouvernement marocain
Mr Bruno CHIAVERINI, Délégué Général

Conference of Presidents of the Outermost Regions
Mr Alberto João JARDIM, President of the Autonomous Government of Madeira, Portugal

IT4ALL
Mr Javier del Pozo Moro (representing Mr Peñagaricano, Secretary General)

NORTHERN FORUM
Mrs Priscilla POST-WOHL, Executive Director

nrg4SD (Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development)
Mr Sabin INTXAURRAGA, Coordinator, nrg4SD Secretariat

ZICOSUR
Mrs Patricia Mujica Silva, Secretaria Pro Tempore de ZICOSUR.

FOGAR/CPMR General Secretariat
Mr Xavier GIZARD, Secretary General
Mr Paolo GIANNARELLI, Advisor to President Martini
Mrs Marie-Ange ORIHUELA, Director in charge of Extra-European Relations

OBERVERS
Mr Christophe NUTTALL, Director, Hub for Innovative Partnerships, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
Mrs María José RODRÍGUEZ CARBAJAL, EU Adviser, Principality of Asturias
M. Pedro MOYA, Secretary General, “Acción Exterior”, Junta de Andalucia
Mrs Esther KENDECK, Ministry of External Relations, Cameroon

Apologies:
Mr Jean-Yves LE DRIAN, President of Brittany Region, France
Mr Christian GUYONVARCH, Vice-President of Brittany Region, France
Mr Antonio ERNANI LIMA, Executive Secretary, Codesul
Mrs Tasneem ESSOP, Co-Chair nrg4SD, Minister for the Environment, Planning and Economic Development, Western Cape Province, South Africa
Mrs Esther LARRAÑAGA, Co-Chair of nrg4SD and Basque Minister for the Environment and Land Use Planning
Mr Jorge OLMEDO LOAYZA, Secretario Ejecutivo OLAGI
Mrs Anastasia BOZHEDONOVA, Deputy Executive Director & Secretary-Treasurer of Northern Forum
Mr Cristian RODRÍGUEZ SALAS, Intendente del Gobierno Regional de Antofagasta y Presidente de la ZICOSUR.
Mr Constantino ZAFIRÓPULUS, Consejero Regional del Gobierno Regional de Antofagasta y miembro de la Comisión de Producción y Comercio de la ZICOSUR.
Mr Mario ACUÑA, Consejero Regional del Gobierno Regional de Antofagasta y miembro de la Comisión de Infraestructura de la ZICOSUR.