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CPMR POLICY POSITION

ADDRESS FROM THE CPMR POLITICAL BUREAU

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THE REGIONS IN FUTURE EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENT POLICY: PREPARING THE 2010 STRUCTURED DIALOGUE

1. As early as 2008, when the Commission Communication on “Local authorities: actors for development” was being prepared, the CPMR stressed the importance of the role the regions play in European development policies and the need to take due account of regional authorities as fully-fledged partners in these policies.
2. The regions now appreciate the efforts made since the Cotonou Agreement was revised in 2005 to give regional and local authorities a bigger say in European development policies. Significant progress has been made in recognising the role they play in these policies: the creation of a programme specifically targeted at non-state actors and local authorities, the emphasis given to the territorial dimension of development cooperation during the 2008 European Development Days, the publication of a European Development Cooperation Charter in Support of Local Governance, the creation of PLATFORMA, the European Platform of Local and Regional Authorities for Development, of which the CPMR is an active member. Other important initiatives include the organisation of the Annual Assises of Decentralised Cooperation on Development and the future creation of a European online decentralised cooperation portal.
3. However, the CPMR notes that these efforts are still insufficient and it cannot be said that the regions are given the full consideration they deserve on the global stage and in development policies. Further work with conviction and commitment is necessary, for example by developing a partnership with central governments and the EU, in which the regions should play a full role. Also, despite the precedent of the 2008 European Development Days, it was very complicated when it came to carving a role for regional and local authorities during the 2009 European Development Days. The regions’ participation should not be an isolated occurrence, with no connection to overall European development policy. It should be a long-term integration process. Furthermore, while the CPMR warmly welcomes the work undertaken by Euromaid during the first half of 2009 aimed at giving the programme for non-state actors and local authorities a greater focus, it stresses that these adjustments have been necessary in order to take better account of regional and local authorities’ real circumstances, especially with regard to non-state stakeholders, and this shows that much remains to be done to ensure that regional and local authorities and their added value in development are fully acknowledged.
4. During this period in which debates are being launched on the EU’s future strategic guidelines, including a new development policy, the CPMR member regions would like to emphasise how important it is to ensure they are involved in the discussions and resulting new practices.
5. In its initial reflections on the reform of the European budget, the European Commission identified three priority areas for future action: sustainable growth and jobs, energy and climate, and Europe as a global player. As far as the latter is concerned, the CPMR can only repeat that it attaches significant importance to

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this view, bearing in mind that numerous problems are nowadays not just dealt with on the regional, national or European stage, but by focusing on the global level. The regions call for a Europe that is a stakeholder in globalisation, promoting its principles and values and playing a key role in the definition of a new, more sustainable and equitable form of global governance.

6. It has to be said that one of the EU's particular characteristics and strengths is its form of governance and internal organisation, which is based on the participation of all tiers of public government and on a genuine partnership between these different levels. This territorial dimension, which is specific to Europe, must at all costs be taken into account, including in the EU's external policies. It is a major asset which has contributed to the development of the EU and its territories. It must also be used as an asset as far as Europe's external actions concerned.

7. In this context, the regions wish to insist upon the importance of certain political principles regarding the regions' participation in the preparation of future European development policy.

a. Now that the Treaty of Lisbon is coming into force and introducing the principles of territorial cohesion and subsidiarity, now including regional and local levels, thus acknowledging the importance of the regions' participation in the development of European policies that are applicable at territorial level, and at a time when international organisations such as the OECD, the UNDP and the FAO are stressing the importance of the territorial approach, **the regions request that the regional level should really be involved in the ongoing debates aimed at determining the EU's new external policy. As stakeholders in development, they cannot be excluded from the new definitions and principles that will determine future priorities.**

b. The CPMR member regions seek to play a real, significant role in future development policies. They are not just executors, which approach the EU to obtain co-funding for projects run with no concern for coherence or respect for the major principles set down by the European Consensus on Development of 2005, the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and reinforced by the Accra Agenda for Action, which recognises the participation of Local and Regional Authorities . On the contrary, they are fully-fledged partners in European development policy, from its design and delivery through to its evaluation.

They are working to promote an approach to aid that enhances the appropriation, alignment and harmonisation of this aid, combined with efforts to achieve effective results. They base their actions upon the priorities identified by and with their southern partners. To do this, **they consider that a territorially-centred approach is necessary. They ask that further consideration should be given to this issue in order to strengthen existing instruments in this field and develop other responses to this need.**

c. They applaud the European Commission's decision to launch a structured dialogue in 2010 to start the debate on future European development policy and instruments to improve the way these incorporate the EU's international commitments. They note that the Commission has committed itself to involving regional and local authorities in this debate alongside the European Parliament and the member states. **They ask the European Commission to ensure that this participation is genuine and organised so as to influence forthcoming debates and decisions.**

d. They furthermore emphasise that this is about European development policies **as a whole**, and not just the instrument for development cooperation and the programme for non-state actors and local authorities. The regions thus have no intention of limiting their proposals to a specific programme for regional and local authorities and they propose to contribute **their general view and promote the role of regional and local authorities in sustainable and equitable development.**

e. The CPMR's member Regions stress the **advantage of looking at development cooperation insofar as is possible from a trilateral perspective, particularly south-south-north**, with a view to forming associations with a number of major emerging countries, increasing the leverage effect and outlining a better integrated area of solidarity.