



INTERVIEW

**THE ACADEMIC WORLD APPROVES THE IDEA
OF A WORLD REGIONS' ORGANISATION**

Nicolas Levrat, Director of the *European Institute of the University of Geneva* participated in the *2nd International Convention on a Regional and Local Approach to Development*, which took place in Tangiers 12-14 May 2008, in a session chaired by Danuta Hübner, and dedicated to Regions and Globalisation.

EM: Professor Levrat, why is it important for Regions to be represented at global level?

NL: In the academic world, many of us wonder whether the concept of governance, as defined by the Commission's White Paper of 2001, can be implemented at global level as it is in Europe. In particular, I wonder whether Regions in the future can play a role in global governance as they do today in Europe. Personally I believe it is possible. In Geneva there are a number of International Organisations which have a direct impact on regional and local authorities. Of course I am not thinking about the Security Council, but rather the World Trade Organisation, the International Labour Organisation, the World Health Organisation, or the World Meteorological Organisation which deals with climate change etc... This group of organisations, which is totally uncoordinated, as some countries are members of one organisation but not another, is lacking the opportunity for Regions to express their views. In recent years a number of private companies and NGOs have set up offices in Geneva to protect their interests vis-à-vis decisions which are taken at United Nations level. I am certain that sooner or later Regions and Local Authorities will do the same...

EM: Professor, how do you think the Regions can be represented in Geneva or New York?

NL: In Brussels there are over 300 Regional Representations. There are more Regional Representations than Embassies, since in the World there are fewer than 300 countries... I do not think it is necessary to have the same number, since the impact of EU Legislation is by far more important for the Regions of Europe than that which the United Nations could have. However, a body which brings together many Regions or even a number of associations of Regions, such as FOGAR, would make sense. Personally, I do not believe in direct representation through a single Regional office because Regions are too small to deal with World Organisations. I do not believe in a "more institutional" body with a role similar to that of the Committee of the Regions in the EU either. As I said earlier, the organisation of the United Nations is much more complex than the EU. Therefore, an institutional body would most likely be "premature" because countries (and therefore Regions) which are members of one organisation are not the same as those which belong to another. Furthermore, an association of Regions such as FOGAR would, in a domain which is as complex as that of the United Nations, have a huge advantage over an institutional body: they can act on their own initiative. The strength of a Regional Organisation on a global level lies, in my opinion, in the pro-active lobbying activities they carry out, which can actually influence the decisions made in Geneva or New York.

*Interview by Enrico Mayrhofer
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ARTICLES

WHY HAS THE “ERIKA 3” PACKAGE BROKEN DOWN?

On 20th May, the European Union celebrated the Sea for the first time through the organisation of the “Maritime Day”. The previous week, a large conference was held, devoted to the future of the Outermost Regions and focusing mainly on the role of these European Regions as a leading base in the Indian Ocean and Caribbean. DG MARE has just launched an important invitation to tender, aiming to promote the sustainable development of coastal fishing areas in establishing a network (FAR-Net) for the running and follow-up of the territories receiving support under Axis 4 of the European Fisheries Fund.

After turning our backs on the sea for a long time, we finally become aware that these initiatives demonstrate that part of the future of Europe is determined by the seas and oceans.

This future, which we cannot avoid, will be beneficial provided that, while building it, we take account of the challenges it poses and the risks which we must face.

The EU Member States understand it perfectly through the launch of a bold initiative for the fight against climate change in adopting the “climate package”. This demonstrates that shared political commitment can overcome self-interest and inactivity.

So, why is the “Erika 3” package still stalling? Why, more than two years after its presentation, have we not yet managed to adopt and implement the necessary measures in order to face up to the explosion in maritime transport? Why does it give the impression of successive neglect in this sector, as was the case during the last Transport Council meeting?

These provisions for improving maritime safety are however measures of simple common sense. So please, don't lose heart!

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2nd INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON A REGIONAL AND LOCAL APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT (MOROCCO)

12-14 MAY 2008

The Region of Tangiers-Tétouan, with the support of the Region of Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, FOGAR, the CPMR and the UNDP, hosted the 2nd International Convention towards a territorial approach to development, in Tangiers (Morocco), from 12 to 14 May 2008. This meeting followed the 1st Convention, which was held in Marseille in March 2007, during which the Regions expressed their willingness to contribute towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Objectives.

The 2nd Convention has provided us with the opportunity to take stock of the progress achieved since March 2007 and to continue to take forward the vision of a territorial approach to development and better local governance.

Speeches and minutes are now available on the CPMR website:

<http://www.crpm.org/en/index.php?act=6,1,2,71>

EVENTS

19-24 May 2008, Conference: EU and Europe- Europe and the EU? (Brussels)

<http://karl.aegee.rwth-aachen.de/ab.nsf/AEGEE+Bodies/AEGEE-Europe?OpenDocument>

26 May 2008, EPC annual conference - Debate on the 'State of the Union', Concert Noble (Brussels)

<http://www.epc.eu/>

27 May 2008, European Neighbours Day, European Neighbour's Day, (Paris)

<http://www.european-neighbours-day.com/fr>

30 May, European Meeting on renewable energy, Marseille (FR)

<http://www.crpm.org/index.php?act=6,2,2,43>

04-05 June 2008, European Parliament Plenary Session, Strasbourg (FR)

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/activities/plenary/agenda.do?language=en>

11-13 June, General Assembly of the CPMR Baltic & North Sea Commissions, Herning (DK)

<http://www.crpm.org/index.php?act=6,1,2,70>

12-13 June, CPMR "Employment and Training" Working Group, Tuscany (IT)

<http://www.crpm.org/index.php?act=6,1,2,69>

12-13 June, General Assembly of the Atlantic Arc Commission, Deauville - Basse-Normandie (FR)

<http://www.crpm.org/index.php?act=6,1,2,67>

16 - 19 June 2008, European Parliament Plenary Session, Strasbourg (FR)

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/activities/plenary/agenda.do?language=en>

18-19 June 2008, CoR Plenary Session, CoR Brussels (BE)

<http://www.cor.europa.eu/pages/EventTemplate.aspx?view=folder&id=87402c77-d94a-4381-95b0-5ee5b3ec2d2d&sm=87402c77-d94a-4381-95b0-5ee5b3ec2d2d>

26 June 2008, General Assembly of the Balkans/Black Sea Regional Commission (Rhodes, GR)

<http://www.crpm.org/index.php?act=6,1,2,68>

27 June 2008, Meeting of the CPMR Political Bureau, Rhodes, South Aegean (GR)

<http://www.crpm.org/index.php?act=6,1,2,66>

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