

CHARTA OF EUROPEAN REGIONS

- 1) The elected parties from the legislative European Regions and the representatives of the other European regional systems re-assert their will towards convergence and towards union in diversity, they are aware of the need to safeguard the ideas and the principles of freedom, democracy, respect of human rights and of the rule of law, which constitute a common heritage of European people that cannot be renounced and is an essential condition for maintaining peace and security;
- 2) They reaffirm the need to enhance the value of the common principles by respecting the different cultures and traditions of the European peoples, at national, regional and local levels, and affirm, as reported in the preamble of the Charter of the fundamental rights of the European Union, that this diversity represents a great richness that the European Union must preserve;
- 3) They emphasize that the regional dimension represents, both for the dynamics of the institution and for economic development, a suitable level of authority in the application of the principles of subsidiarity and proximity: one of the fundamental principles for the European government system, as stated in the Commission's white paper on European Governance, which acknowledges a role of mediator between citizens and communitarian institutions for the Regions and local authorities, and recommends close co-operation among European institutions, national governments and regional and local authorities;
- 4) They recognize that the assertion of regional self-government has to operate in observance with the law of the institutions of each Member State, the power of local authorities' as well as the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the State;
- 5) They hope for an extension of process of regionalisation, taking into account the deep differences existing among the legal and institutional traditions of the different European countries;
- 6) They assert that regional authorities, given with their own powers and democratically elected Assemblies, will be the most suitable for bringing European institutions closer to the citizens, which is one of the fundamental goals of the Nice process, but constitutes above all a guarantee against the phenomena of being distanced or cut off from politics;
- 7) They believe that the European institutions must take into account the Regions' role in local government, and that the European Union Treaties must recognize the contribution that the Regions bring to the decision-making process and to the carrying out of Union policies;

8) They hope that the European Union will therefore encourage greater participation from the Regions' in the European decision-making process. In particular Regions will regularly be involved in the preparation of legislation and community policies and the European Parliament will establish a stable cooperation with the regional elective Assemblies through the Committee on Regional Policy;

9) They ask the Member States to strengthen the mechanisms for the participation of the Regions in the European decision-making process in the fields in which they are specifically interested, bearing in mind that article 203 of the EC Treaty already allows the representatives of regional governments to participate in their respective national delegations who attend to the work at the European Union Council of Ministers;

10) They hope that the near intergovernmental Conference of the European Union will assert the Regions' right to bring actions to the European Court of Justice when their powers are directly violated by a community act, in compliance with the national legislation.