

Regional leaders commit to launch an 'Alliance of Regions for European Democracy' to enhance regions' political impact at EU level



□□□ **Apostolos Tzitzikostas (EL/EPP)**, President of the European Committee of the Regions, said: *“We all know that our Union is diverse. Some Member States are more centralised, whilst others regions hold legislative powers. But every region, regardless of their power, has a crucial impact on the national and European level. Regional and local authorities implement 70% of all EU legislation and represent one-third of public spending and half of public investments. Therefore, we cannot accept forever that others will make decisions on our behalf. Our regional and local legal responsibilities and democratic mandate must be fully taken into account at European and national level. It is time to end this democratic and legal gap. The Declaration we are adopting intends to launch a political Alliance of Regions for European Democracy. Its purpose is to improve the way regions impact EU decision making, for the benefit of our Union and the citizens it serves.”*

Gustavo A. Matos Expósito (ES/PES), President of the Parliament of the Canary Islands and President of the Conference of European Regional Legislative Assemblies added: *“The regional parliaments and legislative assemblies of the EU represent the citizens of their regions, through their elected representatives, therefore they are fundamental tools to achieve the involvement of citizens in the process of redefining the EU in the CoFE.”*

José Manuel Bolieiro (PT/EPP), President of the Autonomous Region Azores, who hosted the event, commented: *“It is our duty to promote an alliance. An alliance between all European regions, regardless of their competences within their Member States. An alliance where each of our regions finds its place and every region can count on the support of the other regions.”*

Vasco Ilídio Alves Cordeiro (PT/PES), 1st Vice President of the European Committee of the Regions and Member of the Regional Parliament of Azores concluded the event: *“This declaration is the founding document of an Alliance of Regions for European democracy. Our mobilisation is crucial for the Conference on the Future of Europe, as local and regional authorities represent the third pillar of European democracy. We need to reinforce their political role for the implementation but also for the definition of all policies that are relevant to our communities.”*

[The Declaration](#) **“The place of regions in the European Union architecture in the context of the Conference on the Future of Europe”** can be endorsed [here](#).

Quotes from other speakers at the event:

- **Mark Speich (DE/EPP)**, CoR CIVEX Chair and Secretary of State for Federal, European and International Affairs in North Rhine-Westphalia: *“Regions know better about the implementation of EU law than the national level. They are also closer to EU citizens and enterprises. Strengthening their position in the institutional structure of the EU could attribute to a better EU decision-making, and at the end to a better EU legislation.”*
- **Concepción Andreu Rodríguez (ES/PES)**; President of the Regional Government of La Rioja: *“ The participation of regional administrations in European affairs should be included in the national and regional legal systems. La Rioja is reforming its Autonomy Statute and one of the proposals is the regional participation in the European legislative process.”*
- **Rachid Madrane (BE/PES)**, President of the Parliament of the Brussels-Capital Region: *“The regions are at the forefront of European democracy. They are often the laboratory for new practices that aim to « facilitate » democracy – I am thinking in particular of innovations in participatory democracy, such as deliberative commissions. Discussions about their place in the European architecture are therefore very important and the Brussels Parliament will actively participate in them.”*
- **Ilse Aigner (DE/EPP)**, President of State Parliament of Bavaria and President of the Conference of German state parliaments: *“In the future, the regions and their political leaders must be given sufficient degree of flexibility in Europe. Because there is only citizens’ support for the European idea if citizens are more involved – the regional parliaments as the people’s representation have in this context a central role to play as legislators and as mediators of European policy.”*
- **Massimiliano Fedriga (IT/ECR)**, President of the Friuli-Venezia Giulia Region and President of the Conference of the Regions and Autonomous Provinces: *“ Citizens look at their daily life and judge institutions and politics based on the quality of life, the availability of public services and the care of public goods that are provided to them, as well as on the wellness and the safety of the environment where they live. Therefore, we need concrete measures which should be built in the medium-long term to be financially sustainable.”*
- **Antje Grotheer (DE/PES)**, CoR CIVEX Member and Vice-President of Bremen City Parliament: *“As those closest to the people in Europe, we in the regions know exactly what the inhabitants of Europe need. It is therefore important that our opinion is heard, our challenges seen and our solutions recognized in the EU.”*
- **Leendert Verbeek (NL/PES)**, King’s Commissioner of Flevoland and President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe: *“The region plays a unique role as a bridge between the European and national levels and local communities and citizens. Regions have the primary responsibility for ensuring territorial cohesion, social protection of citizens and their participation in democratic governance. This special role of regions must be strengthened further through their greater involvement in national and European policy making.”* □

– **Olgierd Geblewicz (PL/EPP)**, President of West Pomerania Region and President of the Association of Polish Regions: *“The Conference on the Future of Europe is a window of opportunity to demonstrate the relevance of the regional level. It is mainly about two things – first providing input for policies which are more citizen and needs-based. Second, providing more democratic legitimacy in EU’s structures. I think we as regional leaders fit both purposes excellently. Because of the variety of competences that our regions have we can deliver ideas for policies which are both needs-based and comply with the realities of implementation.”*

– **Alin-Adrian Nica (RO/EPP)**, President of Timiș County Council: *“The Conference on the Future of Europe is a historic chance for all our European territories to build the democratic house we want to live in. It is the chance for authorities and citizens to work together and generate a rethinking and revival of European policies to fit our children’s needs!”*

– **Juraj Droba (SK/ECR)**, President of the Bratislava Region: *“I am convinced that regions should become stronger partners of the EU institutions, especially when it comes to the preparation of the new programming period and EU Recovery Plan. Conference on the Future of Europe is an excellent opportunity for cities and regions to raise their voices and to call for strengthening of their role in EU policy-making.”*

Watch the conference [here](#).

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