

### Note

Subject: Activity Report Vienna 2012

Vienna took over the Presidency from Brussels at the end of 2011. Due to limited resources and an analysis of the possibilities Vienna intended from the very beginning on to focus its content related activities. In the preparation of the Presidency the main ideas raised were European Economic Governance and Cohesion Policy. The second idea was to raise the profile of REGLEG through permanently working with other actors in Brussels, mostly the European Commission and the CoR.

After the start in January 2013 it soon became clear that Cohesion Policy would be the priority. Different factors led to this result. First the European Economic Governance is still in the making, a moving target. Experiences with the European semester, which started 2011 are new. And economic and monetary policy – although effecting REGLEG regions often more than others – are a often a central state competence. It was therefore natural to focus on Cohesion Policy, having in mind that our regions are main players in this field. REGLEG issued two position papers – on the Common Strategic Framework and the European Code of Conduct on Partnership. Both analyse on a technical level the two instruments the European Commission proposes. One main point of criticism is the legal nature – a delegated act. Our concerns have been taken mainly into account when looking at the result in the final version of the future regulations on Cohesion Policy.

Collaboration with other institutional actors in Brussels is the second main achievement. REGLEG is an official partner of the European Commission Structured Dialogues on Cohesion Policy. This voluntary exercise will become a legally binding dialogue in the new period 2014 – 2020. REGLEG participated at two dialogue meetings, the first one focussing on a general overview of the state of negotiations, the second one covering the partnership principle and the European Code of Conduct on Partnership. For the future we should try to underline the special role of subnational authorities also in these dialogues.

All the yearlong we cooperated with the Committee of the Regions (CoR). Political participation at the General Structured Dialogue on the work programme of the European Commission 2013 and the possibility of the nomination and subsequently already active participation in the newly formed Subsidiarity Expert Group are the most visible results aside the regular meetings of the interregional group REGLEG/CALRE.

The interregional group met two times in December 2011 and July 2012 Main topic on the agenda was at both meetings subsidiarity, with a presentation of the new REGPEX-database and the work programme on subsidiarity of the CoR.

Our subsidiarity expert Johannes Maier contributed with the support of some regions to the on-going consultation on e-invoicing.

With CALRE and the CONGRESS – both are long time partners and RELEG signed separate cooperation agreements with them 2010 (CALRE) and 2011 (CONGRESS) – our main common activity during 2012 was the conference in Innsbruck from 31 may – 2 June 2012,

organised jointly with the Tiroler Landtag (Regional parliament of Tirol). “Regions with legislative powers in Council of Europe and European Union - challenges and strategic goals” gave an overview on topics such as regionalisation in Europe with a key note speech from REGLEG (Jean-Luc Vanraes) on the situation of REGLEGs in the EU, regional action in the fields of democracy, transparency and human rights and cross-border co-operation with a second key note speech from Harry Kopietz from Vienna. Special attention was devoted to the development of various systems of regional democracy (federal countries, regionalised countries, regions with special status) and to the representation and role of regional governments and parliaments within the Council of Europe and its intergovernmental bodies. A declaration summarises the main topics of the Conference.

Internally Vienna tried to establish a new system of regular reporting from the different meetings it attended as Presidency. Vienna has the impression from the feedback it got that this has been warmly welcomed. The same can be stated from the new system of preparing the CoCo-meeting. The CoCo Flash – a short content oriented summary before a CoCo – as well as the supporting notes to structure the discussions have proven to be valuable.

For Vienna the two CoCo+ were extremely helpful to prepare the position papers, they attracted - mainly because of the speakers and topics – interest also from other regional offices in Brussels. In January a representative of the Polish presidency in the Council gave an overview of the achievements during their presidency in the Council in the second half of 2011 in the field of Cohesion Policy. In April Peter Berkowitz from the European Commission presented the Common Strategic Framework.

#### ANNEX:

List of Activities 2012