The Committee of the Regions: Key dates

1994 - 2010
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The origins of the Committee of the Regions

The Committee of the Regions (CoR) was established in 1994 under the Maastricht Treaty, but its foundations can, arguably, be traced back to more than 30 years earlier and a proposal by the European Parliamentary Assembly (forerunner of the European Parliament) on 9 May 1960 to set up a consultative committee on regional economies.

However, it was not until the 1986 Single European Act that the idea of an advisory body composed of representatives of regional and local authorities really began to take shape. The Single European Act recognised the important role of regional development in achieving a fully functioning single market, underlining the strong link between economic and social cohesion, and this was a major factor behind the decision of the European Commission to set up the Consultative Council of Regional and Local Authorities on 24 June 1988.

This, in turn, paved the way for the CoR by providing territorial authorities with a genuine European forum on issues relating to regional development.

On 21 October 1990, the Commission published an opinion calling for the creation of a representative body of the regions with a consultative role and the European Parliament endorsed the idea. The European Council of Rome on 14-15 December 1990 noted the importance which certain Member States – notably Germany, Belgium and Spain - attached to consulting regional and local authorities as part of the EU decision-making process. Crucially, the Commission was won over to the idea, not least because it saw a “Europe of the regions” as a key pillar in furthering integration.

The subsequent Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) negotiations culminated in a decision by the European
Council of Maastricht on 9-10 December 1991 to establish the CoR.
The heads of state and government envisaged the Committee playing a dual role: to help shape European legislation, and to act as a direct link between Brussels and the citizens of Europe.

7 February 1992
The CoR is officially established by the Maastricht Treaty, otherwise known as the “Treaty on European Union”.

Article 198a of the Treaty stated that the Committee would have 189 members, who would “be completely independent in the performance of their duties, in the general interest of the Community”.

Committee members and an equal number of alternate members would be appointed for a four-year term by the Council, acting unanimously on proposals from Member States.

Article 198c required the Council or European Commission to consult the CoR in five Community policy areas of regional concern:
- public health;
- trans-European networks in the field of transport, energy and telecommunications;
- education and youth;
- culture.

The Committee could also produce opinions on its own initiative on any matter where it considered that specific regional interests were involved.

A Treaty protocol (No 16) laid down that the CoR was to have a common organisational structure with the Economic and Social Committee.

1 November 1993
The Maastricht Treaty enters into force after a lengthy ratification process.
9-10 March 1994
The CoR holds its inaugural plenary session in Brussels. Jacques BLANC (EPP, FR), leader of the Languedoc-Roussillon regional council, is elected as the first President, with Pasqual MARAGALL I MIRA (PES, ES) as First Vice-President.
Addressing the meeting, European Commission President Jacques DELORS states that the CoR’s calling must be to strengthen the democratic legitimacy of the Union. “Because of the extraordinary diversity of its make-up, the Committee of the Regions will be a unique piece on the institutional chess board. It will be able to exert a very special power based on expertise and influence.”
DELORS says the CoR had two key responsibilities: first, to strengthen the feeling of “belonging” among ordinary people; and second, to alert the European institutions to the risks of any sort of backsliding.
The plenary, which is also attended by European Parliament President Egon KLEPSCH, establishes eight commissions, four sub-commissions and a commission for institutional affairs to prepare the CoR’s opinions.
Jacques BLANC is elected first President of the CoR

Their remits are:
- Commission 1: economic development, local and regional finances
- Subcommission 1: local and regional finances
- Commission 2: spatial planning, agriculture, hunting, fisheries, forestry, marine environment and upland areas
- Subcommission 2: tourism and rural areas
- Commission 3: transport and communications network
- Subcommission 3: telecommunications
- Commission 4: urban policies
- Commission 5: land use planning, environment and energy
- Commission 6: education and training
- Commission 7: citizen’s Europe, research, culture, youth and consumers
- Subcommission 7: youth and sport
- Commission 8: economic and social cohesion, social policy and public health.

In its first year of operation, the CoR produces 40 opinions, half at its own initiative.
**12 March 1994**
The first staff members of the CoR secretariat are installed in the “Galerie Ravenstein” complex in the centre of Brussels.

**16 November 1994**
The European People's Party (EPP) and Socialist (PES) groups are formally recognised in the CoR at its fifth plenary session.
The European Alliance (EA) and the Liberal (ALDE) groups soon follow suit.

**9-10 December 1994**
The CoR calls on the EU heads of state and government, meeting at the Essen Summit, to clarify their definition of subsidiarity.

**1 January 1995**
The number of CoR members increases to 222 following the accession of Austria, Finland and Sweden to the European Union.
21 April 1995
The landmark opinion on the Revision of the Treaty on European Union (CdR136/95), better known as the “Pujol Report” after its rapporteur Jordi PUJOL (ALDE, ES), the Catalan President, underscores the CoR’s future aims and ambitions. Pujol calls for the CoR to become the EU’s “subsidiarity watchdog” and for a right to initiate annulment proceedings at the European Court of Justice if it believes its own rights or the subsidiarity principle are being abused.

20 July 1995
Addressing the plenary session, European Parliament President Klaus HÄNSCH hails the CoR as a “major political assembly”, adding that the Committee and Parliament “are not competitors but partners, with a complementary role”. Hänsch supports the CoR’s request for Parliament to be allowed to ask it to deliver opinions.

21 September 1995
European Commission President Jacques SANTER, addressing the CoR plenary, stresses the crucial role of the Committee in ensuring the smooth functioning of European democracy, in order to close the gap between Brussels and the ordinary citizen.
20-21 March 1996
Pasqual MARAGALL I MIRA (PES, ES), Mayor of Barcelona, is elected President of the CoR. He pledges to focus on building a transparent, legitimate internal organisation and for the CoR to be given institutional status.

May 1996
The CoR secretariat moves into the Ardenne building in the heart of the European quarter in Brussels, and close to the European Parliament.

15-16 May 1997
The CoR hosts the European Summit of the Regions and Cities in Amsterdam. The Committee presents a report drawn up by Edmund STOIBER, Prime Minister of Bavaria (EPP, DE), and Fernando GOMES, Mayor of Porto (PES, PT), calling for the CoR to be recognised as a fully-fledged institution, with rights to initiate proceedings at the European Court of Justice, and to be given more areas of mandatory consultation. The summit also calls for the European Parliament to be given the right to consult the CoR.
2 October 1997
The Amsterdam Treaty is signed on 2 October 1997. The Treaty consolidates and extends the CoR’s role as an EU consultative body. It doubles the number of areas in which the Council or Commission have to consult the CoR, with the addition of:
- employment policy;
- social policy;
- environment;
- vocational training;
- transport.

Article 265 of the EC Treaty states that the European Parliament can consult the CoR. By abolishing Protocol 16, the Amsterdam Treaty also establishes administrative and budgetary autonomy for the Committee of the Regions and the Economic and Social Committee. In particular, the Amsterdam Treaty does away with the requirement that the Committee of the Regions submit its rules of procedure to the Council for approval.

17 October 1997
Jean-Claude JUNCKER, Prime Minister of Luxembourg, briefs the CoR Bureau on the forthcoming extraordinary European Council meeting on employment. He says that combating unemployment is not only a matter for national governments; regional and local authorities must also play their part in helping to create the right conditions for job creation.
19-20 November 1997
European Commission President Jacques SANTER and Valéry GISCARD D’ESTAING, President of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions and former President of France, address plenary. The CoR Bureau sets up the Committee for Administrative and Financial Affairs, made up of 15 members.

18-19 February 1998
Manfred DAMMEYER (PES, DE), Minister for Federal and European Affairs for the German Land of North Rhine Westphalia, is elected President of the CoR. He urges greater autonomy for regions, federal states or provinces in the management of the structural funds, as well as a more competitive EU agricultural policy. The assembly ratifies a Bureau proposal to change the number, make-up and remit of the CoR commissions so that they can more effectively handle the new areas of responsibility vested in the Committee by the Amsterdam Treaty. The CoR will now have eight permanent commissions (Commissions 1 to 7, plus the Commission for Institutional Affairs).
13-14 May 1998
The Bureau sets up the CoR/Central and Eastern European countries-Cyprus Liaison Group to establish relations with the regional and local representatives of countries applying for membership of the EU.
John PRESCOTT, United Kingdom Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, addresses plenary. He emphasises the need for reform of the structural and cohesion funds to correct Europe’s regional imbalances.

1 May 1999
The Amsterdam Treaty enters into force.

3 June 1999
Cooperation agreement signed by President DAMMEYER and the President of the Economic and Social Committee, Beatrice RANGONI MACHIAVELLI.

16-17 February 2000
Jos CHABERT (EPP, BE), Minister for Public Works and Transport in the Brussels-Capital Region government, is elected President of the CoR. Urging the Committee to forge closer links with the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers, he calls for more emphasis on political opinions and less on technical opinions. He announces five political priorities, in the fields of employment, urban policy, European citizenship, environment and enlargement.
30 March 2000
First meeting of the Conference of Presidents of the European Parliament with presidents of the CoR political groups.

13-14 July 2000
The CoR secretariat moves into its third home - the Montoyer building on rue Montoyer, directly adjacent to the European Parliament in Brussels.

26 February 2001
The Treaty of Nice is signed on 26 February 2001. It states that members of the CoR must hold a local or regional electoral mandate or be politically accountable to an elected local or regional assembly. It also lays down that members can now be appointed by qualified majority vote at the Council, rather than requiring unanimous backing. Membership of the CoR will terminate automatically if members lose the mandate on the basis of which they are appointed.

The Treaty sets the maximum number of members of the CoR at 350, with the number of members standing at 317 for an EU of 25 countries.

20 September 2001
Protocol of Cooperation signed by European Commission President Romano PRODI and CoR President Jos CHABERT.

14-15 December 2001
The Laeken Summit sets up the Convention on the Future of Europe, tasked with drawing up a draft EU Constitution.

CoR member Valéry GISCARD D’ESTAING, President of the Regional Council of the Auvergne, is nominated as Convention chairman. The CoR is given six seats on the Convention.
6 February 2002
Sir Albert BORE (PES, UK), leader of Birmingham City Council, is elected President. He identifies two key aims for his tenure: to ensure regional policy remains a driving force at the heart of the EU agenda; and to tackle the “democratic deficit” that has resulted in the wider public feeling excluded from the EU decision making process.

The CoR adopts a new structure for its commissions. The previous eight commissions are replaced by six new ones:
- Commission for Territorial Cohesion Policy (COTER)
- Commission for Economic and Social Policy (ECOS)
- Commission for Sustainable Development (DEVE)
- Commission for Culture and Education (EDUC)
- Commission for Constitutional Affairs and European Governance (CONST)
- Commission for External Relations (RELEX).
28 February 2002
Inaugural meeting of the Convention on the Future of Europe.
Eduardo ZAPLANA HERNÁNDEZ-SORO (EPP, ES), Jos CHABERT (EPP, BE), Manfred DAMMEYER (PES, DE), Patrick DEWAEL (ALDE, BE), Claude DU GRANRUT (EPP, FR), Claudio MARTINI (PES, IT), Ramón Luis VALCÁRCEL SISO (EPP, ES)* and Eva-Ritta SIITONEN (EPP, FI)** represent the CoR on the Convention.
* Mr VALCÁRCEL SISO replaced Mr ZAPLANA in February 2003.
** Mrs SIITONEN acted as an alternate from October 2002.

13-14 March 2002
Plenary adopts an opinion by two former CoR presidents, Jos CHABERT (EPP, BE) and Manfred DAMMEYER (PES, DE), calling for the division of powers between the EU and Member States, regions and municipalities to be revised, to make it clearer and more firmly based on the subsidiarity principle. The opinion is drawn up in response to a request from the European Parliament for the CoR’s views - the first time the Parliament uses its right, granted in the Amsterdam Treaty, to consult the CoR.
6 May 2002
CoR member Jean-Pierre RAFFARIN (EPP, FR), President of the Poitou-Charentes Regional Council, is appointed Prime Minister of France.

3-4 July 2002
Plenary adopts the CoR's first formal contribution to the Convention. This calls for:
- recognition of the CoR as an institution;
- power to bring actions before the Court of Justice, in defence of its prerogative and the subsidiarity principle;
- the right to attend the dialogue between Commission, Parliament and Council in the framework of the co-decision procedure;
- strengthening of consultative powers by requiring the institutions to justify failure to take account of the Committee’s position, in all areas where consultation is mandatory;
- mandatory consultation to be extended to all subjects relating to the powers of local and regional authorities, including agriculture, research and technical development;
- the CoR to have the right to address written and oral questions to the Commission;
- co-decision functions in a specifically defined and appropriate number of areas, including cross-border cooperation programmes.

11 July 2002
Eduardo ZAPLANA HERNÁNDEZ-SORO (EPP, ES), First Vice-President of the CoR and President of the Valencia regional government, appointed Minister for Employment and Social Affairs in the Spanish government.
1 February 2003
Entry into force of the Treaty of Nice.

12-13 February 2003
Addressing the plenary, European Commission President Romano PRODI calls for the CoR to have a role in the future system for monitoring subsidiarity. Reinhold BOCKLET (EPP, DE), Bavarian Minister for Federal and European Affairs, elected First Vice-President of the CoR.

5-6 May 2003
The CoR conference held in Leipzig leads to the Leipzig Declaration, spelling out six guiding principles for the reform of regional and cohesion policy. These include the need to pursue a genuine Community regional development and cohesion policy; recognition that regions and local authorities are the most appropriate level for taking and implementing regional and cohesion policy decisions; and underlining the importance of sustainable development and balanced competitiveness.
2-3 July 2003
Arrival at the CoR of 95 observer members from the ten enlargement countries.

18 July 2003
The Convention unveils the draft EU Constitution. The CoR representatives successfully argue for the text to include a new definition of the principle of subsidiarity, a key role for the CoR in monitoring the application of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality and the right for the CoR to institute proceedings at the European Court of Justice where it believes that a legislative act has infringed the principle of subsidiarity.

9 October 2003
CoR President Sir Albert BORE and European Parliament President Pat COX sign a joint declaration calling for the Intergovernmental Conference to respect the outcome of the Convention.
11 February 2004
Peter STRAUB (EPP, DE), president of the German regional parliament of Baden-Württemberg, is elected President of the CoR. His key aims include strengthening inter-institutional relations and raising awareness about the work of the Committee in the new Member States.

1 May 2004
The number of CoR members increases to 317, following the accession of ten new Member States to the EU.

10 May 2004
Inaugural “structured dialogue” between European Commission and leaders of Europe’s regional and local associations, chaired by Romano PRODI and CoR President Peter STRAUB. The idea of a permanent, systematic dialogue followed the European Commission’s 2001 White Paper on European Governance.
27 September 2004
2,000 participants, representing more than 70 regional and city offices, take part in “Open Days 2004” - a series of conferences and training workshops aimed at boosting awareness about the practice and reform of regional policy. The four-day programme, jointly organised with the European Commission Directorate-General for Regional Policy, provides local and regional authorities with a communication platform in the crucial debate on the future of cohesion policy.

19 May 2004
The CoR adopts the Braga Declaration on fighting racism in and through sport.

27 May 2004
The CoR hosts the First Conference on Subsidiarity at the German Bundesrat in Berlin.

16 June 2004
CoR President Peter STRAUB officially opens the Committee’s new Brussels headquarters at 101 rue Belliard.
29 September 2004
CoR members vote by a decisive margin in favour of sitting in plenary sessions according to political group affiliation, in the same way as the European Parliament, rather than in alphabetical order.

17-18 November 2004
CoR officially celebrates its 10th anniversary at plenary session.

16 February 2006
Frenchman Michel DELEBARRE, Mayor of Dunkirk (Nord-Pas de Calais region) and Member of the French Parliament, is elected President of the Committee of the Regions. He states his desire to make the Committee of the Regions a genuinely political European assembly, able to contribute to relaunching a debate on Europe, and identifies the Lisbon Strategy as one of the CoR's strategic priorities.
1 January 2007
The number of members of the Committee of the Regions rises to 344 following Bulgaria and Romania’s accession to the EU.

27 September 2007
For the first time, a meeting is held in the Committee of the Regions between the Ambassadors/Permanent Representatives of the EU Member States and the President, the First Vice-President, the chairmen of the political groups and the heads of national delegations. This meeting, attended by 24 Permanent Representatives, mostly at Ambassador level, provides an opportunity not only to present the CoR’s priorities for 2008, but also to hear all parties’ views on the possibilities of seeing the CoR’s work contribute to the Council’s procedures and decisions in a more integrated and effective manner.
6 February 2008
Luc VAN DEN BRANDE, Senator in the Belgian Parliament and a CoR member (EPP/BE) since its inception, is elected president of the Committee. In his speech to the plenary assembly he declares: “We must jettison the hierarchical idea of Europe as a pyramid with the EU above the Member States, the Member States above the regions, and the regions above the towns and local authorities. … [we must] strive for a new partnership between the different levels of government that allows the various tiers to work together on an equal footing in order to achieve jointly defined objectives. … What we need, therefore, on the basis of this approach, is not a “Europe of the regions” but a “Europe with the regions, towns and local authorities”. Let’s build Europe in partnership!”

14 March 2008
At the spring European Council, Luc VAN DEN BRANDE is invited to present to the Council president the CoR report “European Regions and Cities - Partners for the Jobs and Growth strategy”.
13 July 2008
In conjunction with the Euro-Mediterranean summit held in Paris, Luc VAN DEN BRANDE presents the CoR initiative of setting up a Euro-Mediterranean assembly of local and regional authorities (ARLEM), which he says would be a permanent body of local and regional representatives from the EU and the partner countries of the three Mediterranean shores. ARLEM is designed to give the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership a regional dimension to complement the existing parliamentary dimension (EMPA).

At their meeting in November 2008 in Marseille, the foreign affairs ministers of the 43 partner states endorse the CoR initiative.
During 2008, the CoR also takes important steps to involve local authorities in the Eastern Partnership, as part of neighbourhood policy, and in development policy and decentralised cooperation policy.
6-9 October 2008
As part of the 6th OPEN DAYS (“European Week of Regions and Cities”) organised by the Committee of the Regions and DG REGIO of the European Commission, some 7,400 decision-makers, elected local and regional representatives and representatives of business, industry and civil society take part in 145 events and seminars.
Also during October, some 230 local events are held in over 30 European countries under the heading “Europe in my region”, through which the Brussels event is relayed at local level and knowledge and experience shared on job creation, innovation and climate change, and a contribution made to the debate on the future of European cohesion policy.

7 October 2008
The Committee of the Regions names its reception area on the 5th-floor atrium, “Open Ledra Street”. The reopening in April 2008 of the famed “Ledra Street” in the centre of Nicosia (Cyprus), 44 years after its closure, awakens new hope for the peace process on the island.
“Having Ledra Street as a symbol in our building testifies to the support of CoR members for the peace process in Cyprus”, says Luc VAN DEN BRANDE. “By calling one of our main reception areas Ledra Street, we want to emphasise that regional and local authorities play a crucial role in breaking down barriers and facilitating dialogue between communities, and in building peace and stability.”

24 October 2008

In cooperation with the French Senate and in the presence of some ten representatives from national parliaments, the CoR holds the Third Conference on Subsidiarity in Paris. This conference is part of the CoR’s strategy to strengthen good governance in Europe by developing its network for monitoring subsidiarity and through cooperation with national parliaments.
5 and 6 March 2009
The European Summit of Regions and Cities is held in Prague, hosted by the Czech Presidency of the European Union. Committee President Luc VAN DEN BRANDE’s clear statement on the need to avoid protectionist measures during the developing economic crisis is welcomed by Commission President José Manuel BARROSO who addresses the meeting. The Summit forms a platform for the launch of a consultation of all local and regional authorities on “Lisbon after 2010” in order to provide a basis for CoR recommendations to the European Council on the successor to the Lisbon Strategy. The Committee believes that no strategy can be successful without the active involvement of lower levels of governments in its design, implementation and evaluation.

21 April 2009
As part of the celebrations for its 15th anniversary, the Committee of the Regions sets out its Mission Statement – outlining the role of the CoR, its values and its aspirations for the next 15 years and beyond. Presented at the April plenary session, the Mission Statement explains in clear and simple language what the Committee does and how it does it, reflecting the strengthened role and higher political and institutional profile given to the CoR by the EU Treaty. “Our Mission Statement describes a body that is fit for a Europe of the 21st century, built on co-operation between each level of government, connected with the daily life of the citizens, based on the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, and on a shared commitment to economic and territorial cohesion”, President VAN DEN BRANDE tells the plenary session.
22 September 2009
The CoR launches its White Paper on Multilevel governance in Europe at a conference in Bruges, Belgium, organised jointly with the College of Europe. The conference seeks to identify ways of securing a multi-level partnership to respond to the socio-economic demands of globalisation. “We must not shy away from addressing the crisis of the nation state”, says former Prime Minister of Spain and chairman of the Reflection Group on the Future of Europe, Felipe GONZÁLEZ, in his conference address. He goes on to highlight the “… downward sharing of responsibilities to the regional and local authorities that are the very epitome of a citizen-centred approach and that, by becoming more flexible, have thus also become more readily responsive to the expectations of people and businesses. Ultimately, these authorities are the guarantors of diversity in European identity”.

4-7 October 2009
In Brussels, the CoR OPEN DAYS - European Week of Regions and Cities 2009 brings together 6 000 participants from around 40 countries worldwide, including politicians, practitioners, academics and representatives from businesses, banks and civil society organisations, for discussions and networking on local and regional issues. Under the overall theme of ‘Global challenges, European responses’, debates in 120 high-level meetings and seminars focus on regional responses to the economic crisis and to climate change. Addressing the conference, Commission President José Manuel BARROSO declares: “The regions are the foremost area for the acquisition of knowledge and for economic activity, employment, social cohesion and innovative systems, and the aim of cohesion policy is to empower the regions and encourage them to rise to the challenges facing them”.
7 October 2009

On the occasion of the annual OPEN DAYS event in Brussels, the CoR launches the European Entrepreneurial Region (EER) award, a pilot scheme designed to identify and reward EU regions with outstanding entrepreneurial vision and to encourage local and regional authorities to do more to promote small businesses across Europe. Each year, up to three regions from across the EU will be granted the right to call themselves “Entrepreneurial Region of the Year”, based on the quality, efficacy and long-term success of their entrepreneurial vision and the political will to implement it.

2 December 2009

Around 300 representatives from local and regional authorities from all over the world meet with their CoR counterparts in the first Assizes of Decentralised Cooperation in Brussels. This event, co-organised by the CoR and the European Commission, is an important opportunity for local and regional authorities to underline how they are in a unique position to encourage cooperation networks between different local communities and regions from northern and southern countries. Assize discussions focus on aid effectiveness, the need for energy for sustainable development, and how best to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, especially in the area of improving health care.
December 2009
At the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP15) held in Copenhagen, the CoR presents its “Mobilising citizens: regions and cities working together for climate protection” event featuring a wide range of high-level speakers representing both the EU and local and regional levels. Through its support for the Union’s Covenant of Mayors initiative – which commits participating towns and cities to go beyond EU emissions and energy efficiency goals – the CoR pledges to act as a forum for the exchange of best practice between regions and cities looking to reduce their carbon footprints.
21 January 2010
The Euro-Mediterranean assembly of local and regional authorities (ARLEM) moves towards tangible actions at its meeting in Barcelona where CoR President Luc VAN DEN BRANDE is elected Co-President alongside Mohamed BOUDRA, mayor of Al Hoceima in Morocco. They outline the ARLEM work programme which will focus on four areas: urban and territorial development, decentralisation, the information society, and support for small and medium-sized enterprises. ARLEM, a joint project of the CoR, regional and local authorities around the three shores of the Mediterranean, and European and international associations representing regional and local authorities working on the ground, will facilitate the establishment of contacts, good practice sharing between cities and regions, and the promotion of inter-municipal and inter-regional co-operation.
10 February 2010
Mercedes BRESSO (PES, IT), a member of the Piedmont regional council, is elected President of the Committee of the Regions on 10 February 2010 and confirmed in office on 9 June 2010. Main political priorities are:

• implementing the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty, more particularly the principle of territorial cohesion, monitoring the subsidiarity principle and the citizens’ initiative;
• taking greater account of regional and local interests in the discussion on the European Union’s financial prospects, particularly with respect to cohesion policy and the Europe 2020 strategy;
• combating climate change;
• framing a European strategy for services of general interest that allows for local and regional competences.

She says: “Local and regional authorities can serve as a reference point for Europe in all of these areas. They are in the front line in times of crisis and have always been the real crucibles for economic, social and environmental innovation.”
3 March 2010

The President of the Italian Republic, Giorgio NAPOLITANO, meets Mercedes BRESSO at the Committee of the Regions.

During the meeting, he refers to the historic opportunity to develop European integration offered by the Lisbon Treaty. He emphasises that the regions and local authorities must contribute fully to European integration, not least through the Committee of the Regions, thanks to their close relationship with citizens. On this subject, President BRESSO stresses that the Committee of the Regions will be responsible in its use of the right conferred on it by the Treaty to bring cases before the Court of Justice of the European Union in the event of violation of the subsidiarity principle.
4-8 October 2010

“Europe cannot afford to ignore its regions and cities”, says Ms BRESSO at the opening session of the 2010 OPEN DAYS, held in the European Parliament’s debating chamber. The theme for the OPEN DAYS is “Europe 2020: competitiveness, cooperation and cohesion for all regions”, and they are attended by some 6000 local representatives and experts, taking part in 130 workshops and conferences from 4 to 8 October 2010. The 8th OPEN DAYS, taking place just a few weeks before the European Commission publishes its 5th cohesion report, gives the Committee of the Regions the opportunity to emphasise its political message.
5 October 2010
At the plenary session, Committee of the Regions President Mercedes BRESSO and Elisabeth B. KAUTZ, President of the United States Conference of Mayors, sign a Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation on climate action in the presence of several hundred regional and local politicians and the EU Commissioner for Climate Action, Connie HEDEGAARD.
This Memorandum of Understanding is the result of cooperation between the Committee of the Regions and the US Conference of Mayors, spurred on by a desire to move the climate action agenda forward.
Mercedes BRESSO opens the first EuroPCom conference on public communication.

13 October 2010
President BRESSO chairs the first European Public Communication Conference (EuroPCom), which welcomes 700 participants. This conference is held jointly with the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union, the European Commission, the Walloon and Flemish Regions and the Belgian Presidency of the European Union.

At the event, the CoR president observes that “we have to pursue a “European brand” for communication that involves our cities and regions”, stressing that communication should not be a matter for Brussels alone, and that one of the key objectives should be to relocate public communication on European issues. BRESSO describes mayors, regional presidents and locally elected representatives as the spokespeople with the most direct involvement, thanks to their regular contact with the public.
José Manuel BARROSO, President of the European Commission, tells the CoR plenary: “We cannot win the hearts and minds of European citizens without the support of local and regional representatives, who must help promote Europe. You are essential relay points for the EU.” The Commission president adds that he wanted to encourage the Member States to involve local and regional authorities by means of “territorial pacts” in order to achieve the goals of the Europe 2020 strategy.

Mercedes BRESSO stresses that “Local and regional authorities manage two thirds of all public investments. Their support is therefore crucial (…). We are ready to work with the Commission, the Member States and the European Parliament to meet the goals which have been set. This relationship must be established on an equal footing: the towns and regions must not be considered mere underlings.”

1 December 2010

José Manuel BARROSO, President of the European Commission, tells the CoR plenary: “We cannot win the hearts and minds of European citizens without the support of local and regional representatives, who must help promote Europe. You are essential relay points for the EU.” The Commission president adds that he wanted to encourage the Member States to involve local and regional authorities by means of “territorial pacts” in order to achieve the goals of the Europe 2020 strategy.
“The Committee of the Regions will be a unique piece on the institutional chess board”

Jacques Delors, European Commission President, March 1994