



Multi-level governance and active subsidiarity for sustainable recovery and resilience

The role EU Regional Legislative Assemblies

13th October 2021 (11.30-13.00 CET)

WORKSHOP REPORT

The European Week of Regions and Cities provided for a great opportunity for the **European Committee of the Regions** and the **Conference of Regional Legislative Assemblies of the EU (CALRE)** to join forces in organising a workshop on *Multi-level governance and active subsidiarity for sustainable recovery and resilience*, highlighting the importance of coordination between all levels of government for a successful recovery and the role played in this process by the EU regional legislative assemblies.

The first panel of this workshop entitled '**Trade-offs between strong regional powers, leadership and multi-level governance in the recovery agenda**' was moderated by **Mark Speich** (DE/EPP), Secretary of State for Federal, European and International Affairs in North Rhine-Westphalia (Germany), and chair of CIVEX commission of the European Committee of the Regions. Pointing out that '*cities and regions have... been in the frontline of social and economic recovery measures*', Mr Speich noted that '*in some cases, regions and cities have made full use of their competences; in other cases, we have seen tendencies to a centralization of response measures, which may have put the principle of subsidiarity into question*'.



Mark Speich (DE/EPP)

The debate opened with a video message from Mr. **Karl Heinz Lambertz** (BE/PES), Chair of the European Committee of the Regions Subsidiarity Steering Group, and President of the Parliament of the German-speaking Community of Belgium, urging for consideration of regional diversity in EU policy making as a prerequisite to sustainably anchoring the EU in the minds and hearts of the people where they live. Describing the subsidiarity principle as '*part of the European Union's DNA*', Mr Lambertz called for this concept to be ascribed its specific content by the EU institutions, national, regional and local levels all working together.



Karl Heinz Lambertz (BE/PES)

The first panel of the workshop was further enriched by the expertise of Mrs **Simona Piattoni**, Professor of Political Science at the Department of Sociology and Social Research of the University of Trento. From her perspective, assuming that the emergency period is over, the open question now is how the recovery plan includes the LRAs in the implementation. The projects should be drafted together with the LRAs, but it seems like the regions are involved more in the implementation phase rather than in the drafting. Besides centralisation, Professor Piattoni also touched upon the focus of the recovery plan on material rather than human aspects, and on the issue of the definition of subsidiarity, saying '*subsidiarity is not a legal concept, it is a political and democratic concept. It means that representatives of citizens at different levels of aggregation, therefore potentially with different ideas, must be consulted*'.

Mr **Serafín Pazos-Vidal**, author of a publication on *Subsidiarity and EU Multilevel Governance: Actors, Networks and Agendas*, spoke about multi-level governance. For him, the Covid crisis has generated a Copernican revolution on how EU allocates the funds. Underlining the issue of the definition of subsidiarity as a political concept with legal consequences, the issue is how to optimize the legal tools that we already have, like better regulation.

Mrs **Dorothee Allain-Duppré**, Head of Regional Development and Multi-Level Governance Division Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities (CFE) at **OECD**, contributed to the debate by giving her perspective on how multi-level governance works in recovery situations. Giving that not all the places have the same recover capacity, Mrs Allain-Duppre stressed the importance of coordination, as a key to success. She presented the recovery plan as an opportunity to build a strong and resilient multi-level governance system.

Also contributing to this debate via video messages were Ms **Francesca Campolongo**, Deputy Director of the 'Growth and Innovation' Directorate and the Head of the 'Finance & Economy' Unit of the European Commission **Joint Research Centre**, presenting the placed based innovation and smart specialization strategy, to optimize the use of EU funds, and Mr **Klemen Zumer**, Head of Linking the Levels Unit, Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services (**EPRS**) of the Secretariat of the European Parliament, who highlighted the importance of Research to empower EP members, in order to have better legislation that takes into consideration the territorial needs and differences.

The second panel, moderated by Mrs **Antje Grotheer** (DE/PES), a Vice-President of Bremen City Parliament (Germany) and a member of the CoR CIVEX commission, looked at the topic of *Assessing the functioning of multi-level governance in the context of the recovery and resilience agenda - the perspective of EU Regional Legislative Assemblies*.



Antje Grotheer (DE/PES)

The panel discussion opened with a video message from **Gustavo A. Matos Expósito** (ES/PES), President of the Parliament of the Canary Islands and President of the Conference of European Regional Legislative Assemblies (CALRE), speaking from the Canary Islands, where a powerful volcanic eruption in La Palma Island has caused great material, economic and environmental damage, pointing out the creation of a Mixed Commission for reconstruction composed of different government levels, including the local level, as a clear example of the *'commitment between all the government levels as the proper way towards reconstruction'*. *'The answer of the EU has also been immediate,'* he said, translating into something as essential as a *'trust of citizenship in its institutions'*.



Gustavo A. Matos Expósito (ES/PES)

President of the Parliament of the Canary Islands and President of the Conference of European Regional Legislative Assemblies (CALRE)

Attendees to this workshop also benefitted from the insights and interventions of Ms **Blanca Martín Delgado** (ES/PES), President of Extremadura Regional Assembly (Spain), who shared her experience in Extremadura: *"Progress of my community has been mostly linked to the EU"* she said, *"In Extremadura we adopted legislation to execute the funds and we created a Committee to ensure transparency in the recovery process"*.

Mr **Karl Freller**, Vice-President of the Bavarian State Parliament, Germany, in his video message, shared the Bavarian State Parliament contribution in shaping the concept of active subsidiarity, and encouraged to look at the recovery as *"an expression of European cross-border solidarity"*.

Mr **Roberto Ciambetti** (IT/ECR), president of the Regional Council of Veneto, member of the European Committee of the Regions, stressed the importance of subsidiarity, that allowed the regions to go beyond national legislation, by giving a quicker response to the Covid emergency. *"Democracy was not affected by the pandemic, thanks to subsidiarity,"* he said.

Mr **Piero Mauro Zanin**, President and Member of the Regional Council of Friuli-Venezia Giulia, member of the European Committee of the Regions, shared the two main projects for the recovery, the "Third Table for reconstruction" and the "Network of young administrators".

Responding to SLIDO questions, most participants were of the view that:

1/ The key to a sustainable recovery lies in a partnership approach as an expression of active subsidiarity (characterized by involving the sub-national level while keeping the current framework of competences),

and

2/ The main obstacle to the functioning of multi-level governance and effective implementation of active subsidiarity is the top-down control of national governments

More information about this workshop and a link to the video recording can be found here:

[Multi-level governance and active subsidiarity for sustainable recovery and resilience \(europa.eu\)](https://european-council.europa.eu/media/e4000000/1/press/2020/11/20201124_multi-level_governance_and_active_subsidarity_for_sustainable_recovery_and_resilience_en.pdf)