Regions and Cities for Europe
Report and pictures

www.pragesummit2009.eu
Luc Van den Brande, President of the Committee of the Regions 4

Pavel Bém, Lord Mayor of Prague 6

Official opening 8

Europe will grow with its regions and cities 11

Sharing responsibility and forging concrete partnerships 13

Final Declaration 16

Launch of the Consultation on the Lisbon Strategy for Sustainable Growth after 2010 19

Europe’s regions and cities at the heart of the global recovery 20

Territorial cohesion, new challenges, new approaches 24

Voting for Europe: What can the EU do for the citizens? 28

Festival "Get a taste of Europe" 30
Just a few weeks after our meeting at the European Summit of Regions and Cities in Prague, I have the pleasure to present to you this publication, which is intended to remind you of the most important moments and messages delivered on this occasion. 'Golden Prague' was an extraordinary place to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the biggest enlargement the EU has ever seen. This city was also an extraordinary place to see all the achievements that have been accomplished over the last twenty years since the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Velvet Revolution. The latter started right between the Žofín Palace and Prague’s Municipal House, those two beautiful venues chosen to welcome more than 650 representatives of Europe’s regions and cities. The beauty of the historic city of Prague, the warm welcome offered to us by Mayor Pavel Bém and especially the importance of our discussions will make this event engraved in the fifteen years of history of the Committee of the Regions. More than ever, this Summit was held at a very special moment. Europe’s regions and cities are facing today the biggest economic crisis since the Second World War and we have been constantly confronted by its impact. Our meeting in Prague offered us a place to bring a special message to our partners from the other European institutions and the Heads of State and Government. We are also key players in finding and implementing solutions to help mitigate and overcome this difficult period. The Prague Summit reminded everybody of the fact that the regions and cities are fully committed to playing their part in the sustainable economic and social reform of Europe through a more decentralised strategy for growth and jobs. More than ever before, economic and social concerns will be at the heart of the European elections in June this year. As representatives of Europe’s regions and cities, our key message will be that Europe has to be built in partnership with all levels of government. The challenges we face more and more cross geographical and political borders and very often the possible responses can only work if they are implemented through a system of shared responsibility. Besides the main messages of speakers at the Prague Summit, you will also find in this publication the final declaration, which I presented to Mirek Topolánek, the Czech Prime Minister and President of the European Council, just before the Spring Council on 19 March. I hope you will enjoy reading this publication and I also hope you will have the possibility to share the messages it contains. Europe begins in our regions and cities and the success of Europe will be our success, so let’s build and develop it in partnership.

Luc Van den Brande
President of the Committee of the Regions
Cohesion policy has gained in recent months for me rather a new dimension. Despite the fact that its basic purpose and principles are generally unquestionable, in the context of the deepening economic crisis, its role must be seen to be more sensitive than ever before. Today cohesion policy is seen not “just” as a tool for reducing the gap between poor and rich regions, but also as one of the instruments to tackle the economic crisis, to maintain social cohesion and start economic growth.

My opinion is that the developed and economically successful regions and cities may be affected by the economic crisis far more than those less developed. Cities must be supported, because without their growth we will never be able to ensure the growth of regions. Without supporting urban growth we may possibly achieve a diminishing of differences in living standards between regions, but the standard of living will remain low and this low level will be everywhere. For any support to be really effective, we must implement it in a Europe without barriers. Without barriers to market goods, services, and the labour market, and without the barriers that stand in the way of the free movement of EU citizens.

There is a challenge we are facing - to be able to set the rules of the game, which will be fair towards all the parties representing the interests of different regions and cities, but not to lose sense of this game when having excessive quantities of players and their individual interests.

Pavel Bém
Lord Mayor of Prague
Acting together also means showing flexibility in exceptional circumstances. The Commission has proposed to support the Member States and the regions in their recovery efforts by accelerating investments in cohesion policy programmes. In our recovery plan, cohesion policy is providing considerable support for public investment by Member States and their regions, with more than 347 billion euros for 2007-2013. To boost the economy as soon as possible, the Commission has decided to frontload its spending programmes, which means accelerating the use of funds in 2009 and 2010. The Member States will receive a total of 11.2 billion euros in advances in 2009.

This figure includes an extra 6.2 billion added by the Recovery Plan. A few days ago, we also announced several decisions aimed at giving Member States more flexibility – from 2% to 10% – in their use of the Structural Funds. This flexibility will enable the regions of Europe to implement more projects on the ground. I would therefore urge you, the representatives of our regional and local authorities, to focus on “high-return” measures, such as investing in energy efficiency and in industries for the future. And I think that one priority for the post-2010 period will certainly be to increase the involvement of local and regional authorities in policy-making. A recent Eurobarometer survey shows that almost 60% of European citizens would like to see regional and local authorities have a greater say in the EU decision-making process.

José Manuel Barroso
President of the European Commission
It is important that at all levels – European, national and regional and local we show solidarity and responsibility. Unfortunately a codified definition of cohesion does not exist. But I believe that cohesion must be especially between people. That’s why we have to help the least developed regions and enable them to benefit from the funds to deal with actual crisis. We have to be able to help those who really need help without breaking the principles of fair competition and public support. We also have to insist on the responsibility of representatives at all levels. The Union is made out of people and not lakes or mountains. Some of our regions will always have more difficult conditions in which to develop themselves and cohesion policy has to help to overcome those difficulties. In the context of the current crisis we welcome the fact that the European recovery package includes a chapter on cohesion policy. In 2007 – 2013 the Members States will have 347 billion euros as a medicine to deal with the crisis and the Commission has demonstrated great flexibility and taken a number of measures in response to the financial crisis, many of them in the field of regional policy.

Cyril Svoboda
Minister for Regional Development on behalf of the Czech Presidency
EU cohesion policy has always been an important vehicle to deliver structural change – and even more so in these turbulent times. The Commission has reacted quickly to the crisis with the European Economic Recovery Plan. Through the cohesion policy, we are doing everything to generate additional investment. At the same time we need to uphold the long-term orientation of our regional development strategies. The crisis is creating a lot of uncertainty for citizens and I’m pleased that you, as their representatives, are ready to search for solutions. This is reflected in the large number of replies to our consultation on the Territorial Cohesion Green Paper. Most understand territorial cohesion in the way that is closest to my heart: that it is first of all about mobilising development potential. I firmly believe that EU policies help most if they help citizens and enterprises unlock the inherent potentials of their territories.

Danuta Hübner
European Commissioner for Regional Policy
Europe will grow with its regions and cities

The anti-crisis package approved in December increases EIB activities in Europe by roughly one third to EUR 60bn lending per year. Energy efficiency is an important part of these additional activities, and if energy and energy efficiency investments for the climate objectives of the Union of round about EUR 1 000bn are needed until the year 2020, then the EIB may finance well above 10% of these needs. The anti-crisis package wants to give it a significant push forward now.

Matthias Kollatz-Ahnen
Vice-President of the European Investment Bank

Europe, which has been living for a long time in social peace and spirit of cooperation without conflict is today facing the greatest economic crisis which could lead to social conflicts or even territorial conflicts. We have to take measures to safeguard and develop social and territorial cohesion and reflect their mutual interconnection and one of the tools which can help us to define a new economic model is an efficient social dialogue.

Mario Sepi
President of the European Economic and Social Committee
Urban and rural regional development are not alternatives or enemies fighting for funds. We should conceive regional development, at the latest by 2013, in such a way that we build on the driving force for development, which are the metropolitan areas, strengthen their competitiveness and potential and make use of them also to develop the regions lagging behind. Such a concept would be the right answer when we look at the challenges of globalisation facing us, because it would strengthen our competitiveness on the whole. Therefore we need multilevel governance and a further speeding up of the transfer of European funds to the local level.

Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz
Mayor of Warsaw

EU cohesion policy must contribute to addressing new challenges such as globalisation, climate change, energy security and immigration which greatly affect our territories. Therefore, we call for greater flexibility when defining the specific priorities for which European funds are allocated according to the idiosyncrasies of each region. European funds earmarked for each region must be better organised within a broader strategy of competitiveness and regional sustainability. EU cohesion policy must also adapt to the political and institutional diversity of the regions.

José Montilla Aguilera
Member of the Committee of the Regions, President of the Generalitat de Catalunya
Sharing responsibility and forging concrete partnerships
We need a Europe of the citizen where no person is left behind, but every individual has an equal chance of developing their human potential. A Europe of justice and human dignity, based upon peace, solidarity and cooperation, rather than war, conflict, occupation, exploitation and injustice. The cities and regions, all part of our common heritage, have a valuable contribution to make. Europe must not become an economic desert punctuated by a few sharp peaks of oligarchic prosperity and economic development. It must remain a space of equal opportunity, nourished by creativity and imagination from every possible source. Now more than ever, we need the totality of our best efforts, we need solidarity, compassion and a faith in our common future.

Vaira Vike-Freiberga
Vice-Chair of the Reflection Group on The Future of the European Union 2020-2030, former President of Latvia
Our citizens do not understand the language that today’s Europe speaks. We have to make Europe more visible and show people what the added value of Europe is for our Cities and Regions.

Michael Häupl
Member of the Committee of the Regions,
Mayor of Vienna,
President of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR)

We now need a Europe which can recognise why this crisis occurred, which will learn from previous mistakes and especially a Europe that doesn’t give up on its democratic values or its cultural identities. Europe will have to strengthen itself in this crisis by developing cooperation and multilevel governance.

Vicente Álvarez Areces
Member of the Committee of the Regions,
President of the Principado of Asturias Government.
Final Declaration
Conclusions of the European Summit of the Regions and Cities on 5 and 6 March 2009 in Prague

We, members of the Committee of the Regions and elected representatives of regional and local authorities gathered here in Prague on 5 and 6 March on the occasion of the European Summit of the Regions and Cities, and at a time when the European Union is celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin wall, Solidarnosc’s victory in Poland and the fifth anniversary of the enlargement of the EU to central and eastern Europe:

- Stress that the European citizens expect greater security, stability and efficiency from the European Union and that they request from the EU institutions political management which is closer to the people and more in tune with their day-to-day life.

- Reaffirm that the achievements of the European Union, its process of political integration, its common policies and, in particular, its regional policy, are an unquestionable strength with regard to overcoming the consequences of the economic and financial crisis and responding to global challenges.

- Express our deep concern about the repercussions of the global economic and financial crisis for businesses and citizens in our regions, cities and municipalities and its impact on their jobs, living conditions and confidence in the future.

- Are convinced that only a united, ambitious Europe based on solidarity and collective responsibility, with nearly 500 million inhabitants, will be able to:
  - strengthen the competitiveness of its economy and restore the confidence of consumers and economic players
  - ensure economic, social and territorial cohesion
  - tackle the effects of climate change
  - guarantee the security of energy supply and universal access to energy at affordable prices
  - improve its capacity to work towards a true political union whilst preserving its diversity.

- Recall that the European Union will not be able to respond to the challenges and opportunities of globalisation without the direct involvement of regional and local authorities in devising and implementing Community strategies, in compliance with the principles of subsidiarity, responsibility and shared competences.

- Underline the importance of the crucial role of regional and local authorities, working for economic, ecological and social change, in launching innovative initiatives and facilitating the cooperation which is vital for economic competitiveness and the quality of people’s life.

- Are therefore determined to contribute to the success of economic, social and sustainable reform in Europe. This reform must be based on a more decentralised Community growth and employment strategy and on cohesion policy, which are key instruments for promoting real economic growth and maintaining solidarity between citizens.

- Call for:
  - coordinated action at all levels of political responsibility in order to ensure the success of the European economic recovery plan and to protect citizens against the negative consequences of the economic slowdown and job cuts;
  - the restoration of confidence in the financial system by introducing effective mechanisms for the surveillance of financial institutions;
  - the adoption after 2010 of a genuine European growth and employment strategy, based on the partnership between the European Union, the Member States and its regions and cities, which fosters long-term investment in education, training, research and innovation and the development of quality infrastructures and energy-efficient technologies;
  - the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, which will strengthen both Europe’s capacity to decide and act in the world and the shared responsibility of the different levels of power for achieving common objectives, in accordance with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality;
  - an ambitious reform of the Community budget, combining the objectives of competitiveness, solidarity and sustainability;
  - an overall strategy for guaranteeing energy security and adaptation to climate change;
  - a strong regional policy which can support all the regions, which takes into account the effects of the current crisis, particularly with regard to the eligibility of regions for structural funds after 2013, which incorporates as a crucial challenge an urban policy for the sustainable development of European cities and which, through cohesion policy and complementary instruments, strengthens territorial cooperation not only between EU regions but also with regions in third countries;
  - an integrated and comprehensive approach to migration and integration based on the efforts of local and regional authorities;
  - multi-level governance which, in compliance with the principle of subsidiarity, fully involves local and regional authorities in the Community decision-making process.
- Therefore request:

• the Member States, in accordance with the commitments made at the meeting of Heads of State or Government on 1 March 2009, to adopt a clear position against national protectionism and to safeguard the potential of the internal market to support the recovery and growth of the European economy;

• the Member States and the European Commission to take note, at the European Council meeting on 19 and 20 March 2009, of the Committee of the Regions’ commitment to implementing the Lisbon Strategy and its reform, promoting the incorporation of regional reform plans into national strategic plans and developing local governance involvement indicators in order to assess the national plans for reform that are submitted;

• the European Commission to draw up a White Paper on territorial cohesion, the definition, objectives and funding of territorial cohesion of which are such as to guarantee equity and solidarity between territories and make an effective contribution towards ensuring climate protection and addressing the effects of globalisation and the demographic challenge;

• the European Investment Bank to support the financing and investment capacities of regional and local authorities: investment in innovation, research and knowledge in regions and cities and the development of the public-private partnership are fundamental for the success of the European recovery plan;

• the Community institutions to improve lawmaking, to reduce administrative procedures and to take account of the principles of proportionality and simplification;

• national parliaments to listen to the voice of regional and local authorities which are willing to take part in monitoring subsidiarity with regard to European legislative acts having a territorial impact;

• the media and members of the public to foster, stimulate and take part, during the European election campaigns, in the political debate for the election of the European Parliament for the next term covering the period 2009-2014.

- Announce our intention to be actively involved in the campaign for the next European elections in June 2009 and strongly invite citizens to determine, through the ballot box, the political and strategic choices of the European Union for the next five years.

Let’s build Europe in partnership!

Luc Van den Brande
President of the Committee of the Regions

These conclusions were endorsed by:

- AEBR (Association of European Border Regions)
- AER (Assembly of European Regions)
- CPMR (Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions)
- CALRE (Conference of Presidents of the Regional Legislative Assemblies of Europe)
- REGLEG (Conference of Presidents of Regions with legislative power) and the AEM (European Association of elected representatives from Mountain Areas)
- CEMR (Council of European Municipalities and Regions)
- EUROCITIES.
After the Lisbon Treaty enters into force, the local and regional authorities will have to go beyond the confines of the institutional stage and go on the offensive against the challenges of tomorrow’s Europe such as European sustainable development innovation; the framing of a new Lisbon Strategy which takes account of the fact that 66.6% of public investment in Europe comes from the sub-national public sector; the formulation of a more flexible EU budget; the practical implementation of the principle of territorial cohesion. In order to achieve these demands, there must be a partnership-based approach, “soft” in terms of tools and geared to maximising the synergies between tiers of government: it is this type of approach which the CoR is seeking to promote through its work on the White Paper on Multilevel Governance.

Michel Delebarre
First Vice-President of the Committee of the Regions,
Member of the French National Assembly,
Mayor of Dunkirk

We know that some of our regions are developing thanks to the principle of solidarity within the European Union. But we also have to understand and remember that this solidarity is beneficial not only for poor regions, but is fine also for rich regions and for Europe as a whole. In the case of Madeira, this solidarity also means that we had the lowest abstention rate during the last European elections and our citizens are very enthusiastic for the European project.

Alberto João Jardim
Member of the Committee of the Regions,
President of the Autonomous Regional Government of Madeira
Launch of the Consultation on the Lisbon Strategy for Sustainable Growth after 2010

Europe’s regions and cities will play their part in shaping the next generation of the EU’s Growth and Jobs Strategy following a major consultation launched by CoR President Luc Van den Brande and Czech Regional Development Minister Cyril Svoboda in Prague on Friday 6 March.

Launching the consultation at the European Summit of Regions and Cities in the Czech capital, President Van den Brande said that the size and scale of the consultation would help give greater impact to the CoR’s suggestions on the future direction of the Lisbon strategy.

“2010 will be the last year of the Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs, launched in 2000 to increase Europe’s competitiveness, and the 2010 Spring European Council will decide what comes next. It is extremely important that all regions and cities can voice their opinion now. It is only with the regions and cities on board that the EU will be able to achieve its goals of boosting economic growth and creating more jobs, especially in these difficult times. I strongly believe that the European Commission, the Council Presidency and the 2010 Spring European Council will take into account all our contributions. This is a remarkable moment, when local and regional authorities can directly express their opinions to Brussels on a new Lisbon Strategy,” Mr Van den Brande said.

Minister Svoboda added: “This major consultation of the level of government closest to citizens on the key issue of the Growth and Jobs Strategy will be addressed directly to EU leaders next spring. If anyone has any concerns about how democratic the EU really is, then this should help dispel them.” The consultation was open to all local and regional authorities, who were invited to submit their comments on the future of the Lisbon strategy. The results of the consultation will be presented and discussed in Brussels during the Open Days week (5-8 October 2009), and be incorporated into the new opinion on the Future of the Lisbon Strategy by CoR member Christine Chapman (UK/PES). This will then constitute the political message that the CoR will address to the 2010 Spring European Council, where the final decision on the future of the Lisbon Strategy will be made.
The year 2009 started with the global economy turning downwards, following an unprecedented financial crisis which exploded in autumn 2008. Forecasts on GDP growth rate, trade flows and unemployment rates look rather gloomy. Shared leadership and action are therefore needed at global level in order to restore confidence, to re-launch the economy, to restructure the global financial and economic order. Jobs and citizens’ quality of life are the concerns in the short term. A reformed model for sustainable progress is the question for the medium to long term. Climate change, energy supply, food security remain as major underlying challenges.

As globalisation shows its multiple facets at the highest intensity, speed and spread, cities and regions are the places where things happen. In cities and regions, citizens and enterprises are facing the global challenges and public authorities are striving to offer them concrete responses. Confidence can be gained back through the common effort made by civil society, economic actors, local and regional authorities, within a context of national and European policies properly targeted. Local and regional investments can help to overcome the difficult periods, to safeguard welfare standards and to give legs to the ambitions to re-invent our future sustainable economic development. As the debate is open on the reform of the global and European governance, strengthening partnership between the different levels of government and increasing the involvement of local and regional authorities become key.

Europe's regions and cities at the heart of the global recovery
We have to deal with different facets of the current economic crisis and we have to deal with this crisis through dialogue and we have to be aware that we all need to push for change together and we need a new development model based on clean energies and on the environment, innovation and research, building a real economy and putting a break on the schizophrenia of today’s unlimited market. It is now the right moment to deal with these issues and the regions must have their say when it comes to building this new social and economic model.

Claudio Martini
Member of the Committee of the Regions, President of the CONST Commission, President of Tuscany Region, President of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR)

Regions and Cities have a major role to play in fighting the economic crisis. Public infrastructure investment is a key pillar of strategic responses to economic crisis in many countries and regional policy can ensure that this public investment is transparent, well-targeted, and timely, and that it leads to sustainable long-term productivity growth. Support for innovation should be a key pillar of economic recovery measures, generating sustainable growth by making regional and city economies more resilient to future economic shocks. Investment in "green" cities can support economic recovery and meet longer-term environmental goals. The crisis and the emerging need for action on climate change also offer a unique window of opportunity to further modernise rural economies.

Marcos Bonturi
Head of the Regional Competitiveness and Governance Division of the Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate, OECD
In the 21st century, the European nation states are too small to tackle the big challenges such as the fight against climate change or overcoming the financial and economic crisis. Regions and cities play a key role initiating and implementing policies and programmes and have to be supported by the European Union when facing tough times. They also have an important role in communicating Europe. If citizens have the feeling that Europe is a positive factor for their daily lives, they are more likely to participate in the elections. A high turnout will give the EU strong legitimacy to act together. At the local level, there is the possibility to inform voters about the elections in June and to get people involved in debates and dialogues to go out and elect the citizens’ Chamber of the EU.

Jo Leinen
Member of the European Parliament, Chairman of Committee on Constitutional Affairs

Europe will continue to do good things as it has been doing for many years and citizens have to be aware of what Europe has done for them. At the same time let’s listen to regions and cities more, especially at this time when people need protection and let’s use our experience and ideas because this is also the way that our citizens will appreciate Europe more.

Flavio Delbono
Member of the Committee of the Regions, Rapporteur on the Lisbon Strategy, Vice-President of Emilia-Romagna Region
Regions are responsible for certain aspects of the economy, although to varying degrees between different Member States. In the face of the present crisis, they are reinforcing their support for the economic activity, especially by investing in the fields of education, innovation and research, or by guaranteeing access to loans for enterprises. But regions cannot act alone. We have to go beyond short-term emergency measures, taking advantage of the situation to rethink economic governance and strengthen the role of the regions for development.

Coping with the crisis operates at several levels through mobilisation of socio-economic actors at sub-national level, e.g. in analysing the state of affairs or around negotiating tables and though cooperation and solidarity between regions, at the level of Euro-regions, at European level (e.g. the workshop to be held on 27 November 2009 in Marseille with the CPMR on the subject of European regions’ expectations and proposals), and also in the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership which must not drown in the present crisis but should be seen as part of the answer to it.

Michel Vauzelle
Member of the Committee of the Regions, President of the Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur Region

A good cooperation between the European, national, regional and local levels is the key instrument in dealing with the recent situation. We also have to use clear and simple language, because it is also important to explain the recent situation to citizens in order to avoid the risk of misunderstandings.

Oldřich Vlasák
Member of the European Parliament, Chairman of the Czech Association of Towns and Municipalities
Territorial cohesion, new challenges, new approaches

European cohesion policy has been demonstrating all its added value throughout its twenty-year long history. Still today cohesion policy demonstrates European solidarity and progress to European citizens, through the face of concrete projects developed across our regions and cities. The policy has evolved throughout its life: it was born to accompany the opening of the Single Market by supporting the development of the weakest regions. It has served to fill the socio-economic gaps created by the successive enlargement of the European Union. It has become a major engine for the enrooting and fuelling of the Growth and Jobs Strategy in all territories of the Union. Recently it has been called upon to support the European Economic Recovery Plan by gearing up investments in a period of crisis.

European cohesion policy currently represents one third of the EU budget and the political debate on its future is taking shape. Major global challenges, such as climate change and energy, demographic change, economic globalisation are spotting new needs for action across the EU regions and cities. The reform of the Treaty is leading to the enrichment of cohesion objectives, adding the territorial dimension to the economic and social one. The overall review of the EU budget will set major objectives at EU level and set the lines for the contribution of different policies to their achievements, as well as their governance framework.

It is already time, therefore, to look ahead to cohesion policy after 2013. For a proper policy design, targets must be defined, in terms of objectives to be achieved, scope and scale of territories to be addressed, and models of governance to be pursued.
Cohesion policy and the common market are both of key importance for the European Union. Cohesion policy represents one of the key European foundations which is solidarity. This is why it will continue to be necessary in the future. Beyond 2013, cohesion policy will have to react to new challenges. In my view, one of them will be the need to consolidate the achievements in those regions which have passed the threshold of 75% of GDP.

I am convinced that the development of these regions is not yet complete and that they still will need a special, decreasing support. I suggest that they be addressed by a special objective called "transitional regions"! In this way, we shall safeguard the invested means of the Structural Funds in a sustainable way and achieve at the same time, step by step, their economic independence.

Michael Schneider
Member of the Committee of the Regions, President of the COTER Commission, State Secretary for Federal and European Affairs, Representative of Saxony-Anhalt to the German Federal Government

The 2009 World Development Report: Reshaping Economic Geography, provides both argument and evidence that instead of focusing narrowly on promoting growth in lagging regions, policymakers are better advised to promote the integration of lagging and leading regions. The most potent instruments for economic integration are unifying institutions and connective infrastructure, not place-based interventions that aim to spread out economic production. Where policymakers recognise this, they do not see agglomeration in leading regions as a bad thing, and they do not view migration to such places as a failure of development policy elsewhere. Indeed, you cannot be both for education and against migration, because the gains from education can often be had only by moving. Again, you cannot be both for innovation and against agglomeration, because larger cities account for much of the world’s innovation. And you cannot be both for international convergence of living standards and against domestic concentration of production because, almost as a rule, rapid growth is spatially unbalanced. The policy goal should be socially inclusive development, not geographically uniform growth.

Indermit Gill
Director of the World Development Report 2009, The World Bank
Territorial cohesion is above all a goal of every EU policy, in the same way as social or economic cohesion. It is the flagship policy for those of us who support a multilevel governance approach in Europe. In these times of economic and social crisis, any recovery plan that does not include the active participation of local and regional authorities is doomed to failure.

Jean-Yves Le Drian  
Member of the Committee of the Regions,  
Rapporteur on Territorial Cohesion,  
Chairman of Brittany Regional Council

Cohesion policy provides considerable support for public investment and makes an important contribution to the European Economic Recovery Plan. In times of economic crisis the fast and effective implementation of EU programmes is crucial - local and regional authorities play here an important role and multilevel governance is essential. The European Summit of Regions and Cities was important as it created a forum for discussion with European politicians and for presentation of local and regional governments’ views.

Jan Olbrycht  
Member of the European Parliament,  
Vice-President of the REGI Committee

In the light of the current economic crisis, we need European policies to support those regions and groups of people hit hardest by the recession. Attaining territorial cohesion and ensuring solidarity amongst and within Member States have become even more urgent for the realisation of the European integration project. This means investing into sustainable green growth that creates new jobs, in skills and qualifications for people and high quality services and infrastructures.

Ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, which makes territorial cohesion an objective of EU policy, is therefore in the interest of all local and regional authorities and their electors.

Mercedes Bresso  
Member of the Committee of the Regions,  
President of the Piedmont Region,  
President of the Conference of European Regions with Legislative Powers (REGLEG)
The unified Europe can only be realised by joint efforts at all levels. The motto of the Prague Summit, 'Regions and Cities for Europe', underlines the necessity to better integrate regions and cities into the European project. Regions with legislative powers are of key importance in this process. They implement the larger part of European legislation and they are directly confronted with the demand and wishes of the citizens. European democracy begins in our regions and cities. Key issues in this respect are closer cooperation between parliaments at European, national and regional level as well as the recognition of the 'Charta of regional democracy'. To fulfill the important role regions play, Europe has to give them the means including the right of appeal to the European Court of Justice.

Herwig van Staa
Member of the Committee of the Regions, President of the Tyrol Regional Parliament, President of the Conference of European Regional Legislative Assemblies (CALRE)

The Summit of Prague was an excellent opportunity to make a valuable contribution to the current European debate on global challenges and the economic crisis. The conclusions of our discussion reveal that only a global sharing of responsibilities and a common pathway of international solidarity can identify effective remedies and create sustainable rules. In the framework of this crisis, the European Union is an excellent example of cooperation between states. As both CoR President van den Brande and European Commission President José Manuel Barroso stressed, the regional and local level of governance has to be considered as the keystone as far as safeguarding the financial mechanism and ethics is concerned. We have to remember that European citizens are the ones suffering the effects of the crisis in their daily lives and businesses.

Isidoro Gottardo
Member of the Committee of the Regions, Member of the Italian Parliament
Voting for Europe: What can the EU do for the citizens?

During a life TV debate on 6 March moderated by the Czech journalist Jakub Železný, Members of the European Parliament discussed about the future of Europe, the role of regions and the European elections in June this year.
From left to the right:
Moderator Jakub Železný,
Luc Van den Brande (President of the CoR),
Oldřich Vlasák (Member of the European Parliament, EPP),
Elmar Brok (Member of the European Parliament, EPP),
Kristiina Ojuland (Vice-President of the European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party - ELDR),
Jacques-Yves Henckes (Vice-President of the Alliance for Europe of the Nations - AEN)
and Jiří Havel (Head of list for the European Elections for the ČSSD representing the Party of European Socialists - PES)
Festival "Get a taste of Europe"

The Festival "Taste of Europe" took place between 5 and 7 March 2009 as a fringe event of the European Summit of Regions and Cities. Its main goal was to address the maximum number of both inhabitants and visitors of the City of Prague, to present the cultural and historical metropolis of Prague and, especially, to present the culture of various European cities and regions in their originality and diversity. The festival was held in the three most visited venues of Prague's historical centre – Wenceslas Square, Old Town Square and Na Prikope Street, and metaphorically connected the main venues of the Summit – The Žofín Palace and the Municipal House. The regional stands lining the main pathway were open everyday from 10 am till 10 pm, and the musical performance on main stage was scheduled from 4 pm till 10 pm. The festival was visited by **20 000 participants a day**. Around **8 000 people** per day visited the regional stands requesting some materials and tasting regional products. **33 European regions** presented themselves in 27 stands (in 54 selling places).
Culture programme –
music bands and ensembles

IVA FRÜHLINGOVÁ and BAND - /CZ/
TERRAFOLK - / SI /
FUN LOVIN’CRIMINALS /USA/
ČECHOMOR - /CZ/
KRAAK & SMAAK - /NL/
SUNSET BLVD. - / CZ /
SIFUVERSUS - / EL / 
GIPSY CZ - / CZ / 

THE HOTCLUB OF DUBLIN / IE/ 
RODICA STEGARESCU / Moldavia /
ŠARVANCI – /SK/
KLAZMER MUSIC /ISRAEL /
TARA VRANCEI – /RO /
a number of Czech folklore ensembles on the side stages
+ jugglers, stilt-walkers, fire-show, traditional Old Prague cabaret,
carnival parade

European countries, cities and regions represented
at the street festival
Austria, Belgium, Croatia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary,
Ireland, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Romania, Slovakia,
Slovenia, Bavaria, Burgundy, Dalmatia, Istria, Central Bohemia Region,
City of Budapest, City of Bratislava, Crete, Eastern Moravia Region,
Kalamata, Koper, Liberec Region, Moldova, Moravian-Silesian Region,
Nitra Region, Nürnberg, Primorsko, Provence-Alpes-Cote d’Azur,
Northern Moravia Region, Pardubice Region, Podkrkonoši Region,
Southern Moravia Region, Zilina Region, Sicily, Slavonije, Trentino,
Veneto, Znojmo Region.

Prague city districts
Prague 1, Prague 2, Prague 3, Prague 6, Prague 9, Prague 11,
Prague 15, Prague 18, Prague 20