



EUROPEAN UNION



Committee of the Regions



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PRESS RELEASE

The French presidency of the European Union, the European Commission, the Committee of the Regions and the Association of French Regions have come together to promote the debate on territorial cohesion and the future of Europe's cohesion policy

The partners welcome the tangible success of the European conference on territorial cohesion and the future of the cohesion policy which was held in Paris' conference centre on October 30 and 31 and which attracted more than 1200 participants from the 27 member states.

This conference, organised by the French presidency of the European Union, in association with the European Commission, the Committee of the Regions and the Association of French Regions, has been an important arena for discussions between member states' national, regional and local players at a time when the world is suffering from a financial crisis.

As Hubert FALCO, France's Secretary of State for territorial development, said in his opening speech on Thursday 30 October: *"the European Union must strive to understand the persistent inequalities which afflict some of our territories better. Our challenge, or to put it more modestly, our task, is to transform such diversity into a truly sustainable development opportunity in the interest of all Europeans."*

As part of the continuing discussions on the future of the cohesion policy after 2013, opened through the adoption of the 4th Cohesion report and the green paper on territorial cohesion from the Commission, this forum was the occasion for the European and national parties concerned to hold ambitious talks to provide specific answers to the needs of territories and to work towards the cohesion that they require.

Danuta HÜBNER, European commissioner for regional policy, Michel DELEBARRE, President of the Committee of the Regions, Alain ROUSSET, President of the Association of French Regions and Pierre DARTOUT, Interministerial delegate for territorial development and competitiveness, and the other participants, spoke about the role of the Union's major policies with significant territorial consequences and their contribution to cohesion before discussing the new challenges faced by territories in a globalised world: within four subject-based workshops, the conference members delved further into the challenges facing rural development and the CAP, the sustainable development of territories in view of climate change and the future of the Lisbon process.

Among the main messages to emerge from the conference, participants stressed the importance of one cohesion policy for everyone and the consideration of territorial cohesion in European policies.

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