



CONFERENCE OF INGOs  
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE  
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Contribution to the

15th plenary session of the Council of Europe Conference of Ministers Responsible for  
Spatial/Regional Planning  
(CEMAT/CoE)  
to be held in Moscow on 8 and 9 July 2010

### Declaration

#### **The Sustainable Territorial Development Committee, on behalf of the Conference of INGOs**

- Has noted with great interest the draft Moscow Declaration on *Future challenges: sustainable territorial development of the European continent in a changing world*, which will be submitted to the Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Spatial/Regional Planning (CEMAT) in Moscow on 8 and 9 July 2010;
- Supports the draft resolutions on the contributions of essential services and the rural heritage to the sustainable spatial development of the European continent, which are also being submitted to the Ministers for approval;
- Endorses the principles, approaches and objectives set out in them and the underlying analysis;
- Subscribes to the priority importance attached by these texts to promoting the territorial dimension of human rights, “especially through stronger territorial cohesion and democratic approaches based on the increased involvement of regional and local authorities and civil society in territorial development processes”;
- Notes, on the basis of observations by national and international NGOs,

that new economic, demographic and environmental constraints are affecting the daily lives of people in all member states and every day are deepening the divides between regions and increasing the inequalities between individuals – a trend which concerns both the public and the private spheres;

that the public finance crisis is hitting not only vulnerable economies but also those of what are regarded as the strongest countries. It is already affecting infrastructure development, the supply of housing, the maintenance and delivery of key public services and social protection measures – and will continue to do so in the short and medium term;

that this new recessionary context calls for a review of the choice and composition of development and well-being indicators and also of the frequency of their use for relevant data. It also calls for efforts to identify new vectors of social and territorial cohesion, from transnational to local level, combined with a rethink of territorial governance.

### **Considering**

- The corresponding concerns expressed in the Declaration on good local and regional governance in turbulent times: the challenge of change adopted by the Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Local and Regional Government in Utrecht on 16 and 17 November 2009,
- The European Regional/Spatial Planning Charter adopted by the CEMAT in Torremolinos on 20 May 1983, which advocates public involvement in the implementation of its fundamental objectives,
- Recommendation No. R (2000) 3 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the Right to the Satisfaction of Basic Material Needs of Persons in Situations of Extreme Hardship,
- The Guiding Principles for Sustainable Spatial Development of the European Continent adopted by the CEMAT in Hanover on 7 and 8 September 2000 (Committee of Ministers Rec(2002)1),
- Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on local and regional public services based on the requirements of the public,
- The Code of Good Practice for Civil Participation in the Decision-Making Process adopted by the Conference of INGOs on 1 October 2009 and endorsed in the Declaration by the Committee of Ministers of 21 October 2009,
- The Declaration on working together for biodiversity, protection of natural areas and the fight against climate change signed jointly by the Parliamentary Assembly, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe on 28 April 2010,

### **The Sustainable Territorial Development Committee of the Conference of INGOs**

**Underlines** that, in the current circumstances, the Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Spatial/Regional Planning (CEMAT) is more than ever before the ideal political instrument for co-operation and new ideas aimed at ending the crisis in Europe through balanced, socially committed and sustainable development.

### **The Sustainable Territorial Development Committee of the Conference of INGOs believes**

- that only the overall sustainable development objectives assigned to Europe by the CEMAT are capable of offering a satisfactory response to the imbalances in the European continent against the background of the major ecological challenges of global warming, the erosion of biodiversity, soil degradation and the scarcity of natural

resources such as water, space, fossil fuels and minerals, which are all limited and non-renewable;

- that shrinking public budgets mean there is a need to find new partnerships, especially public/private partnerships. Care must be taken to ensure that the latter are primarily geared towards projects with a high multiplier effect in terms of well-being for society without, however, neglecting the need to seek added value in economic terms. Resolving housing problems is one of the priorities here, as is the restoration of ecosystems, which provide a whole range of services for society when healthy;
- that the national and regional definition of essential services must be performed in co-operation with all stakeholders, in particular the inhabitants of regions without such services. Apart from education and health, these services, which now include water supply and sanitation, energy supply, electricity and gas, telecommunications, postal services, refuse collection and disposal and public transport, must respond to the most urgent needs as perceived by the public. Everybody, in particular the poorest sections of society, must have access to them;
- that public participation is a factor for efficiency and economy in identifying and capitalising on the endogenous potential of rural and urban areas. This requires careful management of resources, enhancement of the natural and built heritage and preservation of the landscape;
- that such effective participation in spatial planning must come with mobilisation of all socio-economic stakeholders, at all territorial levels. NGOs play a central role as strategic advisers and social mediators. They therefore make an effective contribution to the quality of spatial planning and ensuring sustainable development;
- that the territorial dimension of human rights is vital to European citizens' daily quality of life. It requires a safe environment, in particular through the prevention of the harmful effects of natural and industrial disasters. It must seek to promote the right to a healthy environment rich in biological and landscape diversity.

**The Sustainable Territorial Development Committee of the Conference of INGOs**

**welcomes** and supports the proposal to update the *Guiding Principles for Sustainable Spatial Development of the European Continent*, which serve as an unrivalled reference tool, and undertake to provide specific input to the future work here on the basis of experience gathered at ground level.

Lastly, **the INGOs are convinced** of the CEMAT's unparalleled role in Europe and **urge** that it be enhanced. The values championed by the CEMAT must lead to a new social pact for promoting peaceful coexistence and be shared with all the Council of Europe's partners in Europe and elsewhere.