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(Resolutions, recommendations and opinions)

RESOLUTIONS

COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

106TH PLENARY SESSION, 2—3 APRIL 2014

Resolution of the Committee of the Regions on the Charter for Multilevel Governance in Europe

(2014/C 174/01)

THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS,

- having regard to its Mission Statement ⁽¹⁾ which promotes multilevel governance within the European Union and beyond;
- having regard to its White Paper on Multilevel Governance ⁽²⁾, which proposes that a Charter on multilevel governance be drawn up in order to include a common and shared understanding of European governance among the core values of the European Union;
- having regard to the recognition by the Heads of State and Government of the European Union in the Berlin Declaration ⁽³⁾ of the scope of multilevel governance in the process of European integration;
- whereas multilevel governance is enshrined as a guiding principle in the implementation of cohesion policy in connection with the new common provisions on the structural funds ⁽⁴⁾;
- taking the European Charter of Local Self-Government ⁽⁵⁾ as its foundation, and having regard to the support of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities for this process with a view in particular to transposing this Charter into the legal system of the Council of Europe;
- whereas the present Charter, although not legally binding, will commit its signatories to explain and promote the principle of multilevel governance;
- considering that the Charter could contribute to fiscal consolidation and that therefore the activities and measures resulting from it should not lead to new red tape or costs;
- having regard to the need to mobilise all levels of governance to increase democratic accountability in Europe and ensure the effectiveness, coherence and complementarity of their action;

⁽¹⁾ CdR 56/2009 fin.

⁽²⁾ CoR White Paper on *Multilevel Governance* (CdR 89/2009 fin) and CoR Opinion on *Building a European Culture of Multilevel Governance* (CdR 273/2011 fin).

⁽³⁾ Declaration on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the signature of the Treaties of Rome, Berlin, 25 March 2007.

⁽⁴⁾ Article 5 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006.

⁽⁵⁾ <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/122.htm>

1. approves the draft Charter for Multilevel Governance in Europe;
2. recommends that all the local and regional authorities of the European Union, as well as representatives of the other levels of governance (national, European, international) adhere to the principles of the present Charter as soon as the signature campaign is launched;
3. urges the Member States and their national administrations to be guided by it in implementing the principles and mechanisms it recommends, in order to pay more heed to the legitimacy and responsibility of local and regional authorities;
4. calls upon the institutions of the European Union to apply the principles of the Charter systematically when drawing up, implementing and evaluating European strategies and policies, and renews its recommendation to the European Commission to take the necessary steps to ensure more transparency and participatory procedures in accordance with the key values and principles of this new Charter ⁽⁶⁾;
5. invites the associations of local and regional authorities, together with their networks and political figures wishing to support this process, to declare their support;
6. calls on all parties concerned to strive to ensure that the implementation of the principles and mechanisms proposed does not make decision-making processes more cumbersome or add to the administrative and financial burdens of the local and regional authorities concerned;
7. undertakes to contribute to identifying best practices in decision-making processes in Europe, to encourage networking between the signatory local and regional authorities, and to actively inspire and promote practical multilevel cooperation projects;
8. instructs its President to forward the present resolution to the Member States, to the Presidents of the European Commission, the European Parliament and the European Council, and to the President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe.

Brussels, 3 April 2014.

*The President
of the Committee of the Regions*
Ramón Luis VALCÁRCEL SISO

⁽⁶⁾ CoR Opinion on *Building a European Culture of Multilevel Governance* (CdR 273/2011 fin).

APPENDIX

Charter for Multilevel Governance in Europe

PREAMBLE

Given that many competences and responsibilities are shared between the various levels of governance in the European Union, we recognise the need **TO WORK TOGETHER IN PARTNERSHIP** to achieve greater economic, social and territorial cohesion in Europe. No single level can deal with the challenges we face alone. We can solve citizens' problems on the ground by **COOPERATING** better and running **JOINT PROJECTS** to tackle the common challenges ahead of us.

We stand for a multilevel-governance Europe **'based on coordinated action by the European Union, the Member States and regional and local authorities according to the principles of subsidiarity, proportionality and partnership, taking the form of operational and institutional cooperation in the drawing up and implementation of the European Union's policies'**. In this endeavour, we fully respect the equal legitimacy and accountability of each level within their respective competences and the principle of loyal cooperation.

Aware of our **INTERDEPENDENCE** and ever seeking greater **EFFICIENCY**, we believe that great opportunities exist to further strengthen innovative and efficient political and administrative cooperation between our authorities based on their respective competences and responsibilities. The objective of this Charter, drawn up by the Committee of the Regions of the European Union, is to **connect regions and cities across Europe**, whilst promoting **MULTI-ACTORSHIP** with societal actors such as the social partners, universities, NGOs and representative civil society groupings.

In line with the **SUBSIDIARITY** principle which places decisions at the most effective level and as close as possible to the citizens, we attach great importance to co-creating policy solutions that reflect the needs of citizens.

It is precisely through our commitment to the fundamental **VALUES, PRINCIPLES** and **PROCESSES** underpinning multilevel governance that we believe new modes of **DIALOGUE** and partnership will emerge across public authorities in the European Union and beyond. Multilevel governance strengthens openness, participation, **COORDINATION** and **JOINT COMMITMENT** to delivering targeted solutions. It allows us to harness Europe's diversity as a driver for capitalising on the assets of our local areas. Making full use of digital solutions, we are committed to increasing **TRANSPARENCY** and offering quality public services easily accessible to the citizens we represent.

MULTILEVEL GOVERNANCE helps us to learn from each other, experiment with innovative policy solutions, **SHARE BEST PRACTICES** and further develop **PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY**, bringing the European Union closer to the citizens. We believe that embracing multilevel governance contributes to deeper EU integration by further strengthening the ties between our territories, and overcoming the administrative hurdles in regulation and policy implementation and the geographical frontiers that separate us.

TITLE 1: FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

We commit ourselves to respecting the fundamental processes that shape multilevel governance practices in Europe by:

- 1.1. developing a **TRANSPARENT, OPEN** and **INCLUSIVE** policy-making process;
- 1.2. promoting **PARTICIPATION** and **PARTNERSHIP** involving relevant public and private stakeholders throughout the policy-making process, including through appropriate digital tools, whilst respecting the rights of all institutional partners;
- 1.3. fostering **POLICY EFFICIENCY, POLICY COHERENCE** and promoting **BUDGET SYNERGIES** between all levels of governance;
- 1.4. respecting **SUBSIDIARITY** and **PROPORTIONALITY** in policy making;
- 1.5. ensuring maximum **FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS PROTECTION** at all levels of governance.

TITLE 2: IMPLEMENTATION AND DELIVERY

We commit ourselves to making multilevel governance a reality in day-to-day policy-making and delivery, including through innovative and digital solutions. To this end, we should:

- 2.1. **PROMOTE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION** in the policy cycle;
 - 2.2. **COOPERATE** closely with other public authorities by thinking beyond traditional administrative borders, procedures and hurdles;
 - 2.3. **FOSTER A EUROPEAN MIND-SET** within our political bodies and administrations;
 - 2.4. **STRENGTHEN INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING** and invest in policy learning amongst all levels of governance;
 - 2.5. **CREATE NETWORKS** between our political bodies and administrations from the local to the European levels and vice-versa, whilst strengthening transnational cooperation.
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