



**DOCUMENT OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS OF  
MUNICIPALITIES OF  
ITALY, SLOVENIA, CZECH REPUBLIC, SLOVAKIA, HUNGARY,  
POLAND  
ON THE NEW COHESION POLICY**

**The National Associations of local authorities of the enlarged Europe convened in Rome** on the 16<sup>th</sup> of July to celebrate a Framework Agreement to cooperate in Europe and discuss about the concrete aspects of their common initiatives and projects,

**Consider**

the important events which concern Europe, such as the European Constitution, the recent enlargement of the European Union, the accession process of new Countries, among which the nearby Croatia, and the forthcoming negotiation on the resources and the rules of the new Cohesion Policy after 2006,

**Reaffirm**

the content of the “*Platform of national Associations of local authorities – The cohesion policy of the EU after 2006*”, elaborated by IDEALI on the 30<sup>th</sup> of April 2003 on the reform of cohesion policy, and subscribed by the Italian National Associations and by many other national Associations of the EU-15 and accession Countries,

**Declare their satisfaction**

with the results of the Constitution, supported by the political pressure of European and national Associations representing the local authorities’ interests of the EU-15 and the accession Countries. In particular they underline, as successful elements:

- The wording contained in Art. 5, which emphasises the local and regional autonomy as part of the identity of each Member State;
- The inclusion of territorial cohesion among the objectives of the Union, alongside with the economic and social cohesion;
- The extension of the subsidiarity principle to the regional and local levels, as mentioned in the Protocol annexed to the Constitution;
- The importance of consultation during the process of elaboration of the legislative proposals and the consideration of regional and local dimension in the European acts;
- The evaluation of the impact of every single legislative proposal on public administration, including regional and local levels;
- The right for the Committee of the Regions to bring actions before the Court of Justice in case of infringement of the subsidiarity principle.



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With reference to the reform of the Cohesion Policy proposed by the Commission for the period 2007-2013, the National Associations of Municipalities, convened in Rome, express their satisfaction with the three main strategic objectives of economic convergence, territorial competitiveness and labour mobility, and cooperation. In this context,

*in the forthcoming negotiation on the financial resources  
and the new Regulations,  
the Associations recommend to the Member States,  
the European Commission and the European Parliament  
that the new Cohesion Policy*

- **reaffirms** the communitarian added value of the cohesion policy, the necessity of **strategic long term planning** to guarantee its implementation;
- **underlines** the necessity to avoid a decrease in the amount of resources provided by cohesion policy, calling, instead, for **an increase of its resources**;
- **is based on institutional partnership among all institutions involved** in the implementation of the cohesion policy, as a method and instrument to implement the subsidiary and the territorial cohesion principles. This is the only method that can put together the different competence spheres, particularly regional and local ones, in a shared strategy. This would contribute to increase the coherence of sector based interventions and to realise more effective results;
- **introduces a simplification of rules and procedures, and reinforces the effectiveness of the financial instruments.** To this end, the role of the Commission in supporting the elaboration of national and regional strategies has to be strengthened, as well as the incentive measures for the expenditure, such as premiality reserve in the implementation of the operational programmes. This should be particularly referred to the Regions of the *Convergence Objective*, because of their specific needs for support of their performances;
- **foresees specific instruments dedicated to the urban development**, financed with an adequate quota, able to affirm and spread out a European distinctive character of urban development, in the name of solidarity, sustainability and competitiveness. These instruments should bring within the regional programs the previous experiences of URBAN, should integrate the development of the urban areas with the surrounding territories, and carry out the objectives of the Lisbon and Gotheborg strategies;
- **underlines that the management of these initiatives have to be attributed to the Cities and Municipalities concerned.** Furthermore, **forms of horizontal partnership should be activated** to facilitate the participation of public and private actors in the urban regeneration and development; **as well as forms of vertical partnership** which could be reached in order to improve synergies and cooperation among the different institutional partners concerned by the cohesion policies;



➤ **increases the use of decentralised cooperation** in the new specific *Cooperation Objective*, in the framework of trans-national, trans-border and interregional cooperation among the 25 EU Countries, and in the Balkans area and within the new Euro-Mediterranean neighbourhood policy. The **networks of cities** and the decentralized cooperation among Municipalities bring the territories closer to each other, and increase the dialogue and the democratic participation of different local communities on the basis of common experiences.

*In conclusion,  
the Associations of Municipalities convened in Rome  
declare their engagement to deepen and intensify their relations in order to*

promote a framework of serene and productive cooperation for a successful participation of the new members within the EU family, as well as the achievement of the *acquis communautaire* in those Countries which are in their accession period, especially Croatia, the Balkans, Romania and Bulgaria.

To this end, the National Associations of Municipalities will actively support a common action to highlight the characters and peculiarities of local governments in the life of the EU, in order to contribute to the concrete and tangible achievement of **territorial cohesion**, as recognised in the European Constitution.

Rome, the 16<sup>th</sup> of July 2004