



Spanish EU Presidency and regional and local leaders discuss CoR report about the implementation of the European recovery plan

European efforts to tackle the economic crisis need better coordination and faster implementation on the ground, was the message of a conference organised by the Spanish EU Presidency and the Committee of the Regions (CoR) in Palma de Mallorca today, the 5th Territorial Dialogue for Sustainable Growth and Jobs. Just weeks before Europe's leaders examine the joint response to the crisis at the 11 February extraordinary summit and the March spring council, high-level speakers from EU institutions, national, regional and local authorities discussed the results of a new grassroots survey conducted by the CoR's EU2020 Monitoring Platform. At this year's event, participants had an opportunity to debate the future EU2020 Strategy, that gives priority to achieve a sustainable, smarter and greener social market economy.

In autumn 2009, the CoR had asked regional and local authorities from all over Europe to assess progress during the first year of the European recovery plan, launched by national leaders in December 2008. The survey results were published today and paint a worrying picture: 84% of public authorities reported a decline in economic activities in their region or city throughout 2009, while a similar percentage saw their tax revenues drop. Three quarters of responding municipalities and regions recorded a rise in unemployment, while two thirds were forced to increase expenditure on social and welfare services. Only a quarter expect an economic recovery for this year. One of the key concerns voiced by the participating regions and cities is the lack of coordination between the various levels of government, as well as slow implementation of decreed measures on the ground.

For CoR President **Luc Van den Brande**, the survey results clearly show the need for all political actors to work together in putting the European economy back on track: "The economic crisis is a European problem, even though some areas are hit harder than others, and our response has to be European too. However, a sustainable recovery cannot be achieved by decree from above, a "top-down" approach won't deliver results on the ground. What we need is a broad dialogue about the next steps. Faced with shrinking public revenues, many local and regional authorities are struggling to keep up the frontline services that our citizens rely on, from education and healthcare to waste management and many others. They must be properly involved in preparing the national and EU plans to counteract the effects of the crisis."

For Deputy Prime Minister of Spain, **Manuel Chaves**, "the challenge that we face is to develop policies to take us out of the crisis and at the same time to begin introducing changes in our economies so that the recovery is stable and lasting." In his opinion, the changes experienced by the world before and, above all, after the crisis "show us that things are no longer the same, although the objectives and values we defend have not changed."

Mr Chaves, who is also minister for territorial policy, pointed out that recovery in the jobs market and maintaining the wellbeing of the public should continue to be "at the forefront of our policies and we must deal with them in more difficult circumstances because we have to sustain public finances which have deteriorated." In this context, he added, "the role of policy is fundamental at all levels: European, national, regional and local. For this reason, the Spanish presidency considers it important not to weaken any of those fronts but, rather, to strengthen coordination between the various levels so that

policy is more effective." (An interview with Manuel Chaves on the challenges of the Spanish EU presidency and the current economic crisis is available [on the CoR website](#).)

The Territorial Dialogue for Sustainable Growth and Jobs is an annual conference co-organised by the Committee of the Regions and the incumbent EU Presidency. This format gives CoR members the opportunity to discuss implementation of the European strategy for growth and jobs with high-level EU representatives. At this year's event, participants had an opportunity to debate the future of this strategy in view of the current economic crisis and under the new "EU2020 framework" with **Paweł Samecki**, EU Commissioner for Regional Policy. Please find the full agenda of the meeting at the [CoR website](#) and the [Spanish EU Presidency's website](#).

The Committee of the Regions survey in detail

The final report of the Committee of the Regions survey on the "European Economic Recovery Plan in Regions and Cities: One Year On", is available [on the CoR website](#) together with summaries in all official EU languages. The survey assesses the impact of the economic and financial crisis in Europe's cities and regions and provides a first evaluation of how the European Economic Recovery Plan has been implemented on the ground. The report forms part of the Committee of the Regions' contribution to the 2010 Spring European Council that will take stock of Europe's recovery measures and will also launch a new EU strategy for sustainable growth and jobs ("EU 2020"). The CoR survey ran from mid-October to 30 November 2009. In total, 74 local and regional authorities from 19 EU Member States took part in the survey, including 7 contributions from Spain.

The Committee of the Regions

The Committee of the Regions is the EU's assembly of regional and local representatives. The mission of its 344 members from all 27 EU Member States is to involve regional and local authorities and the communities they represent in the EU's decision-making process and to inform them about EU policies. The European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council are obliged to consult the Committee in policy areas affecting regions and cities. It can appeal to the EU Court of Justice if its rights are infringed or it believes that an EU law violates the subsidiarity principle or fails to respect regional or local powers.

Visit the CoR's website: www.cor.europa.eu

Spanish EU Presidency's website: www.eu2010.es

For more information, please contact:

Angela Cañal Perez, Jefa de Prensa

Ministerio de Política Territorial

Tel.: (+34) 91 2731154

angela.canal@mpt.es

Michael Alfons, Press Officer

Committee of the Regions

Tel.: +32 (0)2 546 8559

Michael.Alfons@cor.europa.eu

To read previous press releases, click [here](#).