

OPINION
of the Committee of the Regions
of 15 September 1999
on the
Institutional Aspects of Enlargement
“Local and Regional Government at the heart of Eu

The Committee of the Regions,

HAVING REGARD TO the decision taken by its Bureau on 15 July 1998, in accordance with Article 19 of the Treaty of the European Community, to issue an opinion on this subject and to instruct the Commission for Institutional Affairs to prepare a draft opinion;

HAVING REGARD TO the draft opinion (CdR 52/99) adopted by the Commission for Institutional Affairs on 15 July 1998 (meeting of 15 July 1998) (Hanningfield DL and Mrs Louppen-Laurant);

adopted the following opinion at its 30th plenary session on 15/16 September 1999 (meeting of 15 September 1999)

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1. Introduction

The forthcoming accession of new Member States will constitute the biggest enlargement round since the founding of the Community, with a large number of new Member States, as well as of population increase.

It is generally recognized that the structures that were created four decades ago for an economy of fifteen, let alone twenty or more. Recent events have clearly shown the urgent need for a radical administration, and for more democracy and transparency.

In addition the 'fabric' of the Union of today is much more closely woven than forty years ago but it has also become a Europe of regions and municipalities. The establishment of the COR is the result of a process that should be considered constituent parts of the Union, and they play a crucial role in the ongoing process of European integration.

The next Intergovernmental Conference must result in a democratic, decentralized and efficient structure to serve the needs of over 500 million European citizens in the 21st century.

With the likelihood of further enlargement of the EU there is clearly scope to review the roles of the COR.

1. This opinion reports on the institutional aspects of enlargement with regard to the Com

Two principle areas of concern are addressed:

- The impact of enlargement on the workings of the COR directly

and

- The role and functions of the COR with regard to the other European Union institutions.
 1. The opinion is very much a working document as the process of moving towards the exact detail and timing for enlargement is not known at this point in time.
 2. The COR anticipates that there will be a need for a further opinion to be issued by the EU will enlarge.
 3. The Committee of the Regions has a key role to play in promoting the principle c

2. **The COR and Enlargement - The Current Situation**

1. Local and Regional government has long been involved with countries outside of the E role in communicating with local and regional authorities in national states who have ex various EU programmes.

1. The COR has already established a “contact group”, to open a dialogue between CEEC and Cyprus. The COR Bureau set this contact group up on the 13 May 1998 and conferences in the various candidate countries and a major conference to report in November 1999.
2. In parallel to work being done by the COR, the other institutions of the European various candidate countries. The individual EU Member States have also had cont
3. The COR feels that a further strengthening of the role of the COR would also be EU. Similarly changes would need to be made to the other EU institutions, in orde relationships, with an enlarged membership and an increasingly integrated Europe that the EU should continue to place a heavy emphasis on the principle of subsidia for the COR, in the decision making process as well as how this principle is applie
4. On 25 March 1998 the Commission approved Accession Partnerships for 10 appl The COR feels that the COR should have a role to play in these Accession Partner democracy in applicant countries and strengthening the principle of subsidiarity.

3. **The impact of enlargement on the workings of the COR directly**

This section highlights the key internal reforms which the COR would have to address prior to

1. **Membership of the COR**

1. Under the Maastricht Treaty, the COR was established with 189 members, copyi number was subsequently increased to the current level of 222 members, when the Further enlargement of the EU might require a further increase in size of the COR.

The current size of each of the national delegations is Appendix One.

2. **The size of the institutions and enlargement**

1. The Treaty of Amsterdam limits the size of the European Parliament to 700 mem debate.

3. **Enlargement and the size of the COR**

The COR considers there are a number of options open to the COR.

1. Firstly the status quo could prevail and the COR could remain with 222 members would be reduced to accommodate the new member states. The size of each nation subsequent phase of enlargement.
2. The second option is to allow the COR to increase with new national delegations delegations as they appear now. The size of the national delegations from candidat levels of other delegations. (See Appendix Two). This would result in a total of 35
3. The third option is to consider a radical overhaul of the system and alter it so that population, as is the case with the European Parliament. This would result in a tota
4. The COR feels that an increase in total size of members would ensure new count secure adequate representation of both local and regional government members.
5. The COR would propose that approximate maximum size of the COR should be national delegations allowing for reasonable representation of both regional and lo representation geographically from within Member States. In particular, care must representation and spread in the smaller national delegations.
6. The COR has produced two scenarios to show possible increases in the size of C enlargement. This is intended to provide a guide as to how enlargement would aff Four.

4. **Membership and composition of the COR**

1. The COR feels that the methods of appointment to the COR should be re-assese vary considerably across the Member States. In view of the accession of new Men would require an in-depth discussion in order to formulate a position for the next I countries must be involved in this debate.
2. The countries which are applying for EU membership have a wide range of struc these should allow both local and regional authorities to be involved.
3. The composition of the COR is by definition a derivative of its role and tasks. As body in the European Union, and as in the Member States the process of regionali:

of the local and regional authorities is proceeding, the debate on the membership a The debate must take account of the internal organization in the future Member St changes in the EU.

4. The COR opinion for the 1996 Intergovernmental Conference (Rapporteur: **Pujo** political mandate and political legitimacy of its members, as well as to the fact tha authority they represent. This demand has not been honoured by the IGC. The C political mandate.
5. In the event of further treaty revisions or the creation of a European Union consti towards greater harmonisation of the European Union, the COR will have to formu like to closely involve the candidates for EU membership in that debate.
6. Any revision of the methods of appointment will include the equal opportunities
7. The rapporteurs propose that, once it becomes clearer which country or countries extended to these countries. Observers would be granted the right to send a repres the opportunity to see the workings of the COR.

5. **Operational and Organisational Issues**

1. There are of course a large number of operational issues which would arise follow
2. There would be a need to look at internal structures, size and number of Commis composition of the staff and other internal arrangements. These matters are curren Procedure".
3. As the process and timing for the next phase of enlargement becomes clearer the steps to ensure that budgetary consequences of enlargement are brought to the atte possible occasion. A medium term planning must be drawn up, taking account of t
4. Like the other institutions, the COR will have to take a decision on the language foreseen for eleven languages. This question must be investigated in the framewor languages into consideration.
5. Both at the level of members and of the administration the possibility of languag activities, should be considered. These measures will ensure a smooth accession at institutions.

4. **The COR, its role and identity with regard to the other EU institutions**

This section deals with inter-institutional aspects of the impact of enlargement on the COR.

1. The enlargement of the EU would lead to some significant issues being reconside works. An enlarged EU would have to consider a range of issues, including possib of the Commission and its structures and so on. This section focuses on some of th amongst the EU institutions.
2. The COR now feels that with the advent of another cycle of enlargement and the structures, the role and position of the COR should be strengthened and that it sho decision making processes in the EU. An increasing number of decisions are now

subjects and local and regional government is growing in importance and influencing the COR.

3. Looking ahead to the next IGC, the COR would like to see moves towards it being

5. Areas of Competency

1. The advent of enlargement provides the opportunity for the policy areas which the COR has re-thought and re-appraised. The accession of new countries clearly justifies a reinforcement of areas of particular relevance to the new countries.
2. The COR feels that as local and regional government is increasingly playing a role in Community competence, which should be included at the next IGC. Crime and other community safety issues are becoming increasingly involved and trying to find solutions to community safety is a task for local communities to find solutions which best fit the problems in that particular region (and that local and regional authorities are becoming increasingly involved in a wide range of issues such as technology and SMEs).
3. The broad "catch-all" terms in the Treaty allow the COR to be consulted in new policy areas which are always easy to define. The enlargement will bring in new, and as yet unforeseen issues and the COR to be consulted on a wide range of policies should continue to exist.

6. The COR and the EU decision making process

1. The EC Treaty sets out the circumstances under which the COR has the right to deliver an opinion if a time it is proposed by the Commission and when adopted by the Council of Ministers.

It would do justice to the ongoing process of regionalization and decentralisation and to the role of local and regional authorities - both in EU and non-EU countries - to reinforce the role of the COR in the decision making process.

In this respect the COR would like to reiterate the demand from the Opinion CdR 136/95 (Rapporteur: J. Durieux) for a full and proper EU institution.

Furthermore, if the Commission or Council chose not to follow the recommendations of the COR, the following measures should be considered:

2. Increased cooperation between the COR and the EU institutions is advocated. In the *Protocol* (November 98) intensified contacts at the level of commissions (EP committees), rapporteurs and working parties were identified as key instruments to improve cooperation between the institutions. In special cases, direct contacts could be considered.

7. The COR and the other EU institutions

Although the enlargement is not the sole ground for radical reforms of the Union's structure, the existing foundations will collapse under the weight of an enlarged Union. The first cracks are already appearing.

The forthcoming IGC may result in further changes to the way in which the European Union will function. The creation of a European Union constitution. The separation of powers will undoubtedly be a major task. The European Union will have to take into account the important role and competencies of Europe's regional authorities. In Europe, the COR will have an important task and relations with other institutions will have to be clarified.

8. Conclusions

1. Accession to the EU presupposes that the applicant countries subscribe to the subsidiarity principle. The Committee of the Regions considers it important to strengthen local and regional democracy in the applicant countries as far as possible to the people. It therefore calls upon the EU, as part of the pre-accession strategy, to ensure that the interests of the applicant countries are taken into account.

2. Size

The Committee of the Regions feels that enlargement of the Union requires a further increase in the maximum size of 350 members is appropriate, and it will consider various scenarios as to how to arrive at this number.

3. Composition

In view of the enlargement of the Union and the forthcoming Intergovernmental Conference, the composition of the Committee of the Regions upon which appointments are made should be re-assessed. A debate on the composition and membership of the Committee of the Regions for the candidate countries.

4. The COR reiterates its demands from the Pujol report, that a new treaty makes reference to the role of the Committee of the Regions and its members.
 5. Candidate countries for the first round of accession will have observer status, allowing them to participate in the work of the Committee of the Regions.
 6. New methods of nomination will take account of the equal opportunities aspect.
- ### 7. Operational and organisational issues

A medium term strategy on budgetary and organization aspects must be developed as soon as possible.

It will include:

- size and composition of the COR organs (Bureau, commissions, etc.)
- budgetary consequences
- preparatory activities, such as language courses
- translation and interpretation

8. The COR and the decision making process

The Committee of the Regions calls for further strengthening of its role in the process of the accession negotiations. The areas with which the COR should be involved should also be extended and those with which the COR has not been involved should be consulted. The possibility to be consulted in other areas should remain.

9. The Committee of the Regions reiterates the recommendation from the Pujol report, that the Commission and Council should be required to explain their reasons for not doing so if and when they choose not to do so.

10. The position of the COR in the EU institutional framework

The COR intends to step up cooperation with the other EU institutions and to do so p; Intergovernmental Conference. One practical way to do this would be to develop joint committees suggest the COR secretariat take steps to arrange for such meetings to begin taking place as soon a further define and emphasise its own role and position, in particular with regard to possible further E

11. The Committee of the Regions must continue and expand its assistance to the countries The COR should provide support, assistance and information, working alongside the oth authorities in the candidate countries must be fully involved in the enlargement process f committees should be set up where local and regional authority issues can be discussed.

Brussels, 15 September 1999

The President

The Acting Secretary-General

of the

of the

Committee of the Regions

Committee of the Regions

Manfred Dammeyer

Vincenzo Falcone

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N.B.: Appendices overleaf.

APPENDIX ONE

This appendix shows the current size of delegations

Current size of national delegations at the COR

Country Number of Members in National Delegation

Austria 12

Belgium 12

Denmark 9

Finland 9
 France 24
 Germany 24
 Greece 12
 Ireland 9
 Italy 24
 Luxembourg 6
 Netherlands 12
 Portugal 12
 Spain 21
 Sweden 12
 United Kingdom 24

Total size of the COR at present is 222 members

APPENDIX TWO

Candidate countries' delegation sizes based on similar size delegations under current provisions.

Country Populations – July 1998 Estimates

Source: Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) World Factbook 1998

Country Population Likely COR Delegation Size

Poland	38,606,922	21
Hungary	10,208,127	12
Czech Republic	10,286,470	12
Slovenia	1,971,739	6
Estonia	1,421,335	6
Cyprus	748,982	6
Malta	379,563	6
Latvia	2,385,396	9
Lithuania	3,600,158	9
Slovak Republic	5,392,982	12
Bulgaria	8,240,426	12

Romania 22,395,848 18

These are the approximate size of the delegations based on total population of the applicant state. If the membership of the COR would be 351.

APPENDIX THREE

Revised delegations based on the same formula used by the European Parliament.

	No. of MEPs	No. of COR members		
		Option 1	Option 2	Current Position
Germany	99	50	33	24
UK	87	44	29	24
France	87	44	29	24
Italy	87	44	29	24
Spain	64	32	21	21
Netherlands	31	16	10	12
Greece	25	13	8	12
Belgium	25	13	8	12
Portugal	25	13	8	12
Sweden	22	11	7	12
Austria	21	11	7	12
Denmark	16	8	5	9
Finland	16	8	5	9
Ireland	15	8	5	9
Luxembourg	6	3	2	6
Total EU	626	318	206	222

This table shows the size of the COR if national delegations are based on a multiple of twice and three times the current size of the Member States.

Option 1: x2 per head of the population per MEP

Option 2: x3 per head of the population per MEP

APPENDIX FOUR

This appendix illustrates how the size of the COR might increase if there were to be two further waves of countries, somewhat speculative at this present time given that the circumstances of candidate countries might help COR members consider issues relating to the size of the COR.

The first wave of countries might include:

Country Number of COR members

Poland 21

Hungary 12

Czech Republic 12

Slovenia 6

Estonia 6

Cyprus 6

Malta 6

This would give a total COR size of: $222 + 69 = 291$

A further second wave of enlargement might include:

Country Number of COR members

Latvia 9

Lithuania 9

Slovak Republic 12

Bulgaria 12

Romania 18

This would give a total COR size of: $222 + 129 (60 + 69) = 351$

APPENDIX FIVE**Internal organization of candidate countries for the first round**

Country	Number of regional authorities or intermediate level	Number of local authorities	Election systems
The Czech Republic	8 regions (<i>kraje</i>).	6,242 municipalities (of which 487 with the statute of town).	
Cyprus	No regional level. 6 districts under the authority of the central government.	32 municipalities.	The mayor is elected, elected and their number minimum of eight and

Estonia	No regional level, but 15 counties (<i>maakond</i>).	254 local authorities (of which 45 urban municipalities (<i>linn</i>) and 209 rural municipalities (<i>vald</i>).	The municipal council among council members
Hungary	No regional level, but 19 counties.	3,156 municipalities (of which 2,900 districts or communes). Different types of communes: 1,143 ordinary communes, 277 "major communes", and 155 towns and 8 "major towns".	The local level is represented by direct universal suffrage. The mayor is elected by the council.
Poland	16 voivodships represented by the " <i>sejmik wojewodzki</i> " (assembly of voivodships). 373 counties ("powiats").	2,468 communes, including towns and villages.	The local level is represented by direct universal suffrage. The mayor is elected by the council.
Slovenia	No regional level.	60 local administrative units whose leaders are appointed by the interior minister. 147 municipalities.	The municipalities are elected, and a municipal council is elected.

¹ CdR 136/95 fin - OJ C 100 of 2.4.1996, p. 1

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