

Conseil des Communes et Régions d'Europe
Council of European Municipalities and Regions

Le Secrétaire Général

Bundeskanzleramt
Präsidentenschaft der Europäischen Union
Bundeskanzlerin Dr. Angela Merkel
Willy-Brandt-Straße 1
10557 Berlin

Brussels, 15 June 2007

Dear Chancellor,

The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) has for over 50 years supported the development of a united and effective Europe, which gives a strong role to local and regional self-government. We therefore wish your Presidency success at next week's European Council in finding a positive solution in relation to the future constitutional or institutional treaty.

I am writing to you on behalf of CEMR's President, Michael Häupl (Mayor and Governor of Vienna) and of our Policy Committee, which met in Brussels on 13th June, and unanimously decided to ask the European Council not to lose or weaken any of the provisions set out in the Constitutional Treaty which relate to local and regional government.

The Presidents of the six major European associations of local and regional government (including CEMR) have previously written to you along similar lines (21st December 2006), and we were pleased to receive a positive response from your office.

We were also very pleased to note the terms of the Berlin Declaration (on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome) which states clearly that, in today's EU, tasks are shared between the EU, Member States and their regions and local authorities. This correctly reflects a modern concept of multi-level governance.

Nonetheless, I am sure you will understand our concern to ensure that, in the midst of possibly difficult negotiations on other points, the gains for local and regional government are not lost by default or as a consequence of other compromises.

In this regard, we felt it important to bring to your attention the fact that President Sarkozy has confirmed, in a letter to the French section of CEMR, that his proposed "simplified treaty" would indeed include the advances for local and regional governments, including for example:

- Territorial cohesion as an objective of the Union (Article I-3)
- Recognition of the principle of local and regional self-government (I-5)
- Extension of the principle of subsidiarity, to include local and regional authorities (I-11)

We also strongly urge the retention of the protocol on subsidiarity and proportionality, as included in the existing Constitutional Treaty, which provides important protections for national parliaments, but also for local and regional governments.

In conclusion, we wish to express our appreciation for the work to date of the German Presidency, including important developments in relation to territorial and urban governance, and again extend to you our hopes for a successful European Council meeting next week.

Yours sincerely,



Jeremy Smith