



**Meeting of the Bureau
of the Union of Socialist Local and Regional Representatives in Europe (USLRRE)
Brussels, Friday 25 November 2011**

Resolution

The European Union is, at present, amidst an unprecedented crisis. The crisis is manifold: economic, financial, political, social, ecological and cultural.

In this particularly difficult period for our nations, it seems imperative to strongly reassert the pivotal role of public authority; that of the state of course, as provident and strategist, but also and above all that of local authorities, the last ramparts before the crisis for our citizens.

In the face of the excessive part played by economic operators, politics must recover to restore meaning and credibility to public policy. It is no longer acceptable that the financial logic of the markets prevail a little more every day over the decisions of democratically elected leaders.

It must be noted that today European leaders, both national and local, do not have in their possession all the necessary levers of action to address this exceptional situation. Our room for manoeuvre diminishes rather considerably year on year.

More specifically, the uncertainties of the banking sector combined with the constraints set by the Basel III Accords severely restrict local and regional authorities' access to borrowing. This recent phenomenon poses a real threat to their ability to invest in the very short term. In several European countries, this credit crunch will have immediate effects on employment and consequently on growth.

Europe's emergence from the crisis in which it is plunged will not be sustainable without significant provision to local and regional authorities for economic development and territorial solidarity. Reducing their financial resources undermines the various recovery plans that have been adopted, rendering them ineffective.

Local & regional authorities, the real conduits of sustainable development

Sustainable development is one of Europe's major objectives alongside peace and freedom of movement. Several articles of the treaties mention the principles, challenges and the vital role of sustainable development.

Today, the GDP cannot remain as the sole instrument of measuring the effectiveness of our policies. The notions of wellbeing and sustainable development must have a part in indices measuring growth that is fair.

However, genuine ambition in this area will not be possible at European level unless it is translated into concrete actions at the level of local authorities.

In this context, local and regional authorities are principal agents of sustainable development. As especially well-placed to act as intermediaries between the State, partner organisations and citizens, it is at their territorial level that European ideas and directions can be converted into concrete actions that may or may not lead to the success of a European sustainable development project.

Assembled in Brussels, the socialist local and regional elected representatives of Europe wish to reassert the following principles:

1. Local and regional authorities are an integral part of the public authority of European states;
2. They are the guarantors of social cohesion through the provision and management of a genuine quality community-based public service;
3. By virtue of their innovation and investment capacity, they foreshadow fully what the Europe of the 21st century will be like.
4. This dynamism requires perennial sources of finance, especially fiscal resources as well as the maintenance of European Structural Funds.
5. Our continent will not be able to achieve fair and sustainable growth without the decisive involvement of local authorities;
6. Fair growth also entails the implementation of neighbourhood policies with partner countries of the European Union, and the deepening of decentralised cooperation.
7. The present crisis is also a political crisis and the socialist and European elected representatives believe in the power of elected representatives to make political decisions other than those that lead to pursuing policies of cuts in public services.