

Environmental Conference of the Regions of Europe



Monitoring report – Aragon Action Plan ENCORE-conference 2008, Zaragoza (Aragon), Spain

Monitoring the Aragon Action Plan

Introduction

ENCORE is the only political platform in the European Union for environment and sustainable development matters. Regions are essential actors in these matters, as they implement 2/3 of EU policies in this field. Moreover, regions play a very important role by providing bottom-up information to relevant policy makers in the EU. For all this, ENCORE is a privileged tool both for regions and for EU institutions.

It is our wish and hope that the Monitoring Report of the Aragon Action Plan will remain in the history of ENCORE, as a milestone that marks the progressive improvement of Regional cooperation in Europe on environment and sustainable development policies.

Alfredo Boné Pueyo Minister for the Environment of the Government of Aragon, Co-President of ENCORE

The following strategy was adopted by the participating Regions:

- to strengthen international political cooperation among the Regions of Europe by organising meetings of political leaders and Ministers;
- to strengthen the environment and sustainable development throughout Europe by promoting Agenda 21 at regional level in co-operation with citizens, organisations, enterprises, other governmental levels and other social and economic partners;
- to work in partnership with businesses at regional level and to involve educational and research institutions in this cooperation in order to acquire new environmental research and knowledge - and to implement this in both enterprises and public institutions;
- to co-operate with the European Commission in implementing the renewed Lisbon and Sustainable Development Strategies as well as the 6th Environmental Action Programme and to ensure that the practical experience of the Regions in implementing EU law is reflected in the future work of the Commission.
- to coordinate sustainable development policies between the regional, the national and the international level.

To implement this strategy, the Regions will work on selected themes.

ENCORE priorities 2008 - 2010

The Conference agreed to the following priority actions for ENCORE for the period 2008 - 2010:

• Water

- Integrated River Basin Management
- Water Quality Management
- Application of the Water Framework Directive
- Application of the Flood Directive
- Water Scarcity and Drought management

• Climate Change

- Renewable Energy and Energy efficiency
- Sustainable Transport
- Mitigation of and Adaptation to Climate Change

• Biodiversity /Natura 2000

- Implementation of the Fauna/Flora habitat directive

Sustainable Development

- Sustainable tourism
- Education for sustainability
- Tools for sustainable development

Seven areas of work were identified

- 1 Contacts with other networks, European institutions and the European headquarters of other international organisations like the UN.
- 2 Implementation and monitoring of ENCORE decisions.
- **3** Promoting the ENCORE Valencia Charter.
- 4 Seminars, workshops, partnerships with other networks, research and exchanges of best practice.
- **5** Partnerships between "old" and "new" EU Regions.
- **6** (Virtual) Working Groups.
- 7 Preparation of ENCORE 2010.

1. Contacts with other networks, European institutions and European headquarters of other international organizations

What the ARAP says	What has been done	Date and place
The Conference welcomed the active role that the Minister for the Environment of Aragon and Co-President of ENCORE, Mr. Alfredo Boné, has played in EU events, such as the Green Week and the Open Days, during which he promoted ENCORE and the role of the Regions in the field of Environment. The Conference encouraged the host of the next ENCORE Conference, to continue Mr. Boné's work in these fora.	 Aragon continued to play an active role during 2008-2010: Participation in the Greenweek 2009: presentation of the Aragonese Strategy for Climate Change and Clean Energies with a stand in the exhibition area of the Greenweek and participation in various side-events. Participation in the Greenweek 2010, and LIFE Conference. 	June 2009, Brussels. June 2010, Brussels.
The Regions of Europe should continue seeking dialogue and co- operation with the EU institutions in the preparation of policies, plans and indicators in the field of environment and sustainable development. The Steering Group was asked to pursue these matters with the relevant European institutions.	 West Finland Regional Env. Centre organized a seminar with cooperation European Commission's Joint Research Centre on "Measuring Regional Sustainable Development with Composite Indicators. Region Västra Götaland co-operates actively as member of NECSTouR, (Network of European Competitive and Sustainable Tourism Regions), promoting sustainable tourism in the Regions of Europe, based on the work done by the Commission's (DG industry) Tourism Sustainability Group. 	16. September 2009, Vaasa

- Meeting between Mr. Boné (Minister for the Environment, Co-president of Encore, Aragon, Spain) and Mr. Claus Sørensen (EC, Director General for DG Communication).	1. July 2008, Zaragoza.
- Meeting between Minister. Boné and Director Jacqueline McGlade (EEA, European Environmental Agency), discussing relations ENCORE – EEA.	4. September 2008, Zaragoza.
- Meeting between Minister Boné and Commissioner Dimas (EC Environment), discussing relations ENCORE – EC.	5. September 2008, Zaragoza.
- Commissioner Hübner welcomed a delegation of Encore ministers in Brussels, in order to discuss Encore and DG Regional Policy relations.	4. November 2008, Brussels.
- Meeting between Minister Boné and Mr. Claus Sørensen (EC, Director General for DG Communication), in order to discuss the environmental awareness campaigns developed in Aragon.	4. November 2008, Brussels.
- Meeting of 9 experts in swine waste treatment and management from all over Europe, within the framework of the LIFE-ES WAMAR project (EC, DG Environment).	3-5. June 2009, Peñarroya de Tastavins (Aragon).
	 Environment, Co-president of Encore, Aragon, Spain) and Mr. Claus Sørensen (EC, Director General for DG Communication). Meeting between Minister. Boné and Director Jacqueline McGlade (EEA, European Environmental Agency), discussing relations ENCORE – EEA. Meeting between Minister Boné and Commissioner Dimas (EC Environment), discussing relations ENCORE – EC. Commissioner Hübner welcomed a delegation of Encore ministers in Brussels, in order to discuss Encore and DG Regional Policy relations. Meeting between Minister Boné and Mr. Claus Sørensen (EC, Director General for DG Communication), in order to discuss the environmental awareness campaigns developed in Aragon. Meeting of 9 experts in swine waste treatment and management from all over Europe, within the framework of the LIFE-ES WAMAR

There are a number of other bodies with an EU-wide mandate which includes environmental and sustainable development matters. The Conference asked the Steering Group to consider co- operation with such bodies if this could lead to benefits for the sustainable development work in the Regions of Europe.		
The Conference welcomed the idea to explore collaboration with the Regional Office for Europe of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP-ROE).		
[contact European headquarters of other international organizations]	- Attendance of UNFCCC COP14 and COP15 During COP15, an ENCORE side-event was organized, during which a political Statement on the role of regions regarding climate change was signed by Tuscany, Drenthe, Catalonia, Cantabria, Jämtland, Emilia-Romagna, Västra Götaland and Aragon.	December 2008 (Poznan, Poland) and December 2009 (Copenhagen)
	- Aragon, Tuscany, Walloon region, Kaunas county, Drenthe, Warmia and Mazury, Basque Country attended the Nrg4SD World Summit of Regions .	29-30. October 2008, Saint-Malo (Brittany)
	- Participation of Aragon at the 5 th World Water Forum and adhesion to "The Istanbul Water Consensus for Local and Regional Authorities".	25. March 2009, Istanbul

- The Basque Water Agency (URA, Spain) signed a MoU with UNDP.	6. April 2009
- Aragon attends the General Assembly of the World Water Council	14-16. October 2009, Marseille
- Attendance of several ENCORE regions to meetings and summits of The Climate Group	9-10 February 2009, Brussels 4-5 March 2010,
- Contacts of Aragon with OECD general secretary and staff	Paris November 2008 and February 2009 Paris
- Catalonia, Aragon and the Basque Country attended the Nrg4SD World Summit of Regions – Climate Change.	20-22 April 2010, Montevideo

2. Implementation and monitoring of ENCORE decisions

What the ARAP says	What has been done	Date and place
The ENCORE 2008 Conference asked the Regions of Europe to contribute actively to the monitoring of ENCORE activities carried out by the Regions in the period 2008 - 2010. The Steering Group was asked to work together with the Aragon Region on the Monitoring Report of the Aragon Action Plan that will be presented at ENCORE 2010.	Mailings have been sent by Aragon to the Steering Group, asking for feedback on the ARAP Monitoring report.	January 2010

The Conference accepted the work by Jämtland on the ÅAP	
Monitoring Report and expressed its appreciation for it. The Report	
includes a description and analysis of the ENCORE activities that	
took place in the period in between the ENCORE 2006 and the	
ENCORE 2008 Conferences.	

3. Promoting the Valencia Charter

What the ARAP says	What Aragon has done
The ENCORE Secretariat will from now on be the depository of the ENCORE Valencia Charter. The list of Regions that have signed the Charter is attached to the ARAP. The Secretariat will contact the other Regions and invite them to sign the Charter.	Signing of the Valencia Charter by 15 new regions, during the Closing Session of the VIII ENCORE Conference (Zaragoza, 26-27 June 2008). Period 2008-2010: Mailing to all EU regions inviting them to visit the ENCORE website and express there their willingness to sign the Valencia Charter. Aragon will contact those regions and enable them the signature of the Valencia Charter.

4. Seminars, workshops, partnerships with other networks, research and exchanges of best practice

What the ARAP says	What has been done	Date and place
The Regions are invited to present to the ENCORE Steering Group initiatives that they would like to develop under the ENCORE umbrella, in particular in relation to the implementation of the ENCORE Valencia Charter and to the priority themes listed in Article 13. So far, the following activities have been announced:		
Thematic seminars/workshops		
1. Sustainable energy and tourism (Jämtland, Aragon)	- Conference on Renewable Energy and Clean Tech tools for regional development.	Östersund (Jämtland), 19-22. July 2009.
	- Conference on Low Carbon Regional Development.	Zaragoza (Aragon), 19-21 October 2009.
2. Biodiversity (Liguria)	International Conference on ''Natura 2000 Network Management''.	20-21 November 2008, Genoa
	Leading Region: Liguria (Italy)	
	Activity: International Conference on "Natura 2000 Network Management".	

	Context: The management of the Nature 2000 sites is the main EU instrument to contrast the loss of biodiversity. In all Europe, the Member States are currently engaged in the identification and implementation of the species conservation measures for these sites.	
3. Education and Sustainable Development (Bavaria)	 Workshop on education and sustainable development, looking at stakeholders, different ways to approach ESD and perspectives in Bavaria and in Europe. Leading Region: Bavaria (Germany), in collaboration with the Network of European Regions on Education for Sustainability (RES) Objective: Presentation of best-practice in the field of education for environmental issues and sustainable development. The main focus will be on examples from Bavaria which are suitable for imitation by other regions and stakeholders. Presentation of the Bavarian Action Plan "Education for sustainable development in Bavaria". RES will also introduce her work in the regional level by practise examples. Activity: workshop on education and sustainable development, looking at stakeholders, different ways to approach ESD 	Date: to be announced. Place: Bavarian Representation in Brussels.

	and perspectives in Bavaria and in Europe.	
4. Strategies for Adapting to Climate Change in the Regions of Europe (North Rhine-Westphalia)	Thematically focused International Symposium on regional adaptation measures.Leading region: North Rhine-Westphalia (Germany)Objective: present regional activities and 	27-29 October 2009, Düsseldorf (NRW)
5. Sports and Sustainable Development (Drenthe)	activities. Bi-regional symposium "Climate in Motion"	2011, Assen

Symposium has been postponeduntil 2011
Leading region: Drenthe (the Netherlands), in
collaboration with Aragon (Spain)
Objective: On 29 August 2009 the Vuelta starts
in Drenthe (the Netherlands). As one of the
activities accompanying this event, Drenthe and
Aragon will organize a bi-regional symposium called "Climate in Motion", on the theme
'Sports and sustainable development'. Aspects
like sport and environment, climate change,
water management and sustainable energy shall
be topics to be addressed. The symposium aims
to attract participants from the regional
governments and from the private sector.
To prepare the conference and to get a clear
view of the questions at hand a deskresearch was made. The results were laid down in a
report in Dutch and Spanish. The report
contains a survey of initiatives, good examples,
policies on sustainability and sports. The report
concludes with some recommendations about
sustainable sport policies on regional level. As
an extra result a document concerning
recommendations regarding the organisation of
large scale sport events in a sustainable and
climate neutral was produced and sent to
Drenthe and Aragon. It will be used in regional
sustainable development- and sportpolicies.

6. Defining the role of regions in European Climate Policy (seminar cancelled)	Seminar has been cancelled Leading Region: South Holland, Netherlands	
7. OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) Workshop "Improving the information base to better guide water resource management decision making" (Aragon)	 Hosted and organized by: Aragon, Spain Objectives: Identify decision makers priorities for developing and using water resource management information Review the extent to which current work in countries and international organisations to improve water resource management information, meets the needs of decision makers Discuss possible areas of improvement in water resource management information, that can serve the future needs of decision makers Establish a set of recommendations that can help guide future OECD Secretariat, national, international and other efforts to improve and further develop water resource management information. Activities: 	4-7 May 2010, Zaragoza
	workshop in which representatives from	

	OECD and non-OECD government agencies, international governmental organisations, private sector, etc., will deliver presentations and have discussions in 8 thematic blocks.	
Partnerships with other Networks		
1. Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development (nrg4SD)	The Basque Country, Tuscany, Walloon Region, Kaunas County and Aragon became members of nrg4SD's Steering Committee.	Saint-Malo, October 2008
2. European Network of Environmental Authorities (ENEA)	The Regional Environment Centres of Häme, North Karelia and Ostrobothnia (Finland) have supported ENEA (European Network of Environmental Authorities for the Cohesion Policy) by means of a report produced within the ENEA WG on Climate change and Cohesion Policy.	November 2009
3. Network of European Regions on Education for Sustainability (RES)	Workshop on Education and Sustainable Development.	Date: to be announced, Bavarian Representation in Brussels
Thematic Research Projects		

1.		
Exchange of best practice		
1. Voluntary agreements as instruments of environmental policy (Bavaria)	By entering the "Environmental Pact of Bavaria - Sustainable Management in the 21st Century", which was signed on October 23, 2000, the Bavarian State Government and the Bavarian business community documented their pioneering role in environmental partnership. The Environmental Pact is a platform, which communicates the common view that environmental protection issues, ranging from climate protection to sparing use of natural resources and Integrated Product Policies up to corporate environmental protection, can only be solved through a cooperative approach. In over 200 implemented measures, 61 of which are joint projects, already over 4,000 companies participating in the Environmental Pact have committed themselves to the further development of environmental protection in Bavaria and strengthening the individual responsibility of companies.	
2. Sustainable energy and sustainable tourism (Jämtland and Aragon)	- Participation of Aragon at Jämtland's Conference on Renewable Energy and Clean	Östersund (Jämtland), 19-22. July 2009

		Tech tools for regional development.	
		- Participation of Jämtland at Aragon's Conference on Low Carbon Regional Development.	Zaragoza (Aragon), 19-21 October 2009
		- Visit of Jämtland delegation to Aragon.	Zaragoza (Aragon), May 2009
3.	Livestock manure (Aragon, Warmia-Mazury, North Rhine-Westphalia)	The regions have exchanged experiences on this matter and have developed technical visits to learn about the actions developed in this field.	Zaragoza (Aragon), April 2009
4.	Aragon and Emilia-Romagna	These regions have developed diverse joint actions on water management, water scarcity and drought and water quality. Both regions are partners at INTERREG 4C project WaterCore and Aragon has participated as speaker at Conferences on these fields organized by Emilia-Romagna.	
5.	Interreg IV-C (7 partner regions)	February 2010: final approval of the INTERREG IVC project on water scarcity and droughts, called "WATER CoRe", in which 7 partner regions participate: Hesse (Germany, leader), Aragon (Spain), Emilia-Romagna (Italy), North Brabant (Netherlands), Hérault (Languedoc-Roussillon, France), and Hungrian	February 2010

	and Romanian institutions.	
6. Earth Sciences and Information Systems (Bavaria, Emilia- Romagna and Catalonia)	Collaboration of Bavaria with Emilia-Romagna and Catalonia in the field of Earth Sciences and Information Systems since 1992. The collaboration led to the organisation of conferences every 3 years since 1994, the last one 2009 in Munich.	Munich, 2009

5. Partnerships between "old" and "new" EU Regions

What the ARAP says	What has been done	Date and place
The Conference asked all Regions to continue to improve contacts, and to start partnerships with Regions from the new Member States, and recognized that the enlargement of the Steering Group will facilitate this process.	According to the SG enlargement: invitations have been sent to the regions of - Usti (Czech Republic) - Pilsen (Czech Republic) - Alentejo (Portugal) - Algarve (Portugal) - Lisbon (Portugal) - Hiiu-Lääne-Saare region (Estonia) - Central Denmark (Denmark)	Winter 2009/2010, Aragon Winter 2009/2010, Aragon Winter 2009/2010, Aragon Winter 2009/2010, Aragon Winter 2009/2010, Aragon October 2009, Häme Spring 2010, NRW
1. Cooperation between Bavaria and different Polish regions	The main cooperation exists in water affairs and is organised by the	

Bavarian project TTW (Technology Transfer Water). This project has cooperations with different Polish regions for many years.	
Activities: Seminars concerning floods and implementation of the water framework directive:	
- Bavaria – Pomerania	29. Sept – 3. Oct 2009, Bavaria 9-10. November 2009, Gdansk
- Bavaria – Little Poland	27. April 2009, Krakow 29. Sept – 3. Oct 2009, Bavaria
- Seminars concerning the geo information system GIS (Bavaria - Warmia and Mazury).	25-26. June 2009, Olsztyn 27. Sept – 1. Oct, Bavaria

6. (Virtual) Working Groups

What the ARAP says	What has been done	Date and place	To be done
The Conference recognized the importance of the ENCORE Working Groups that guarantee continuity and visibility of ENCORE activities. The three existing Working Groups will continue their activities during the next two years.			

1. Virtual working group on climate change (North Rhine-Westphalia)	Leading region: North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany Objective: to present Regional activities in the field of Climate Change (adaptation and mitigation measures); to provide a platform of communication between Regional experts and decision makers; to extend and intensify networking and co-operation		WG meeting and presentation of results 2008- 2010 (Olsztyn Conference, 10- 11. June 2010).
	between Regions; to share best practice; to develop and refine Regional strategies.		
	Activities: organizing a Symposium on adaptation to climate change, maintenance of the website of the working group launched in 2007 (www.regional- climate.eu); sharing information on best practice; identifying projects with a common interest.	Düsseldorf (NRW), 27-29 October 2009.	
2. Virtual working group on Biodiversity (Tuscany)	Leading region: Tuscany, Italy Objectives: - analyze the implementation of the Birds and Habitats directives on the basis of the first phase documents (2006 – 2008), developing the priority themes defined in them. After an initial analysis of the results, we will work with other Regions to exchange experiences and to define opportunities for contacts with DG Environment. The first phase documents have stirred much interest at various		WG meeting and presentation of results 2008- 2010 (Olsztyn Conference, 10- 11. June 2010).

work-program making sure that the issues raised, both in terms of criticism and in terms of good practices can be dealt with in greater in depth. - collect information from other Regions on some of the main themes that have emerged from the questionnaires to make sure that the good practices that will consequently be defined are more representative of the Regions of Europe.	
 Activities: analysis of regional strategies and good practices and collecting further contributions on some of the main themes that have emerged from the questionnaires from a greater number of Regions, by web contacts and technical meetings; sharing information on good practices; identifying possible projects with a common interest; presenting to European Commission the identified regional strategies and good practices as a contribution to the EU campaign launched as "Countdown 2010", for the common task of reducing the loss of biodiversity in Europe; sending of a questionnaire titled "Financing Natura 2000", summary of the results. 	April 2009 May 2010
WG Biodiversity Meeting in Edinburgh (Scotland)	1. April 2009, Edinburgh.

	WG Biodiversity Meeting in Florence (Tuscany, Italy)	18. November 2009, Florence.	
3. Virtual working group on Water (Aragon)	 Leading region: Aragon (Spain). Objectives: Assess water policies in Europe, the EU Water Framework Directive implementation and the important role that regions play both in water management and implementation of EU water regulations. Activities: organizing of a new project on Groundwater Quality, lead by the Basque Country and Aragon (Spain). All European regions are invited to participate in this virtual working group by filling in a questionnaire: - Sending of the questionnaire, designed by the region of Aragon and summary of results. Within the groundwater quality project, a Workshop will be organized, in which the project partners can present and share their experiences in relation to Directive 2006/118. Publication of results period 2006-2008 (booklet). 	July 2009 May 2010 Autumn 2010 Autumn 2010	WG meeting and presentation of results 2008- 2010 (Olsztyn Conference, 10- 11. June 2010).

7. Preparation of Encore 2010

What the ARAP says	What has been done	Date and place	To be done
The Conference welcomed the offer of the Region Warmia- Mazury in Poland to host the next ENCORE Conference in 2010 and asked the ENCORE Steering Group to work with Warmia-Mazury to organize a successful conference.			
As of the closure of the ENCORE 2008 Conference, the Co- Presidency of ENCORE is in the hands of Aragon and Warmia Mazury.			
The Conference thanked Jämtland for its commitment to ENCORE as Co-President during the last 4 years.			

According to the ENCORE strategy:

What the ARAP says	What has been done	Date and place
 to strengthen international political cooperation among the Regions of Europe by organising meetings of political leaders and Ministers; 	 Aragon – Jämtland, ministers' meeting during Jämtland's Conference on Renewable Energy and Clean Tech – tools for regional development. 	Östersund (Jämtland), 19-22. July 2009
	- ENCORE Ministers' meeting.	Ryn (Warmia and Mazury), 24-25. Sept. 2009

	- Aragon – Warmia and Mazury, ministers' meeting, on management of the Co- Presidency of ENCORE and the vital role of regions in European environment policies.	Zaragoza (Aragon), 14-17. April 2009
	- Aragon – Utrecht, exchange of experiences in the field of renewable energies and climate change.	Zaragoza (Aragon) 1-3 June 2010
 to strengthen the environment and sustainable development throughout Europe by promoting Agenda 21 at regional level in co-operation with citizens, 	- Lahti Sub-region (Häme) signed up the Åalborg Charter and Commitment.	2008
organisations, enterprises, other governmental levels and other social and economic partners;	- The City of Lahti (Häme) organized BLA21F network meeting.	October 2009
- to work in partnership with businesses at regional level and to involve educational and research institutions in this co-operation in order to acquire new environmental	- Regional Development Conference in Jämtland (SME)	Östersund, July 2009
research and knowledge - and to implement this in both enterprises and public institutions;	- Environmental Pact of Bavaria (Bavarian State Government and the Bavarian business community)	Bavaria, 2008-2010
 to co-operate with the European Commission in implementing the renewed Lisbon and Sustainable Development Strategies as well as the 6th Environmental Action Programme and to ensure that the practical experience of the Regions in implementing EU law is reflected in the future work of the Commission. 		
- to coordinate sustainable development policies between the regional, the national and the international level.	Low Carbon Regional Development Conference, Aragon-The Climate Group.	Zaragoza, 19-20 October 2009