

O Preface

This is the Drenthe Action Plan (DRAP).¹ DRAP is the result of the conference which took place 21. September 2012 in Drenthe. The new format – a one day conference, emphasis on political discussion – led to the conclusion of seven political alliances. Those alliances are the base of actual political cooperation in ENCORE for the next two years. The alliances are related to existing and urgent environmental issues. A second line of action is intensifying contacts with other networks. This means that the Memoranda of Understanding in the period until the next ENCORE conference should be concretized and put into effect.

I General results of ENCORE 2010-2012

ENCORE 2010 Olsztyn

- 1) At the 9th Environmental Conference of the Regions of Europe (ENCORE 2010) held in Olsztyn, Warmia-Mazury (Poland), on 10-12 June 2010, the participating Regions confirmed their commitment to improve the environment and to promote sustainable development in Europe and climate change mitigation.
- 2) The Ministers expressed the strong desire to engage in a continuous political dialogue and to strengthen international political cooperation among the Regions of Europe.
- 3) The Conference invited the European Regions that have not signed the ENCORE Valencia Charter yet to do so by depositing their formal accession with the ENCORE Secretariat (www.encoreweb.org). The Charter, first adopted in Valencia in 1995, and amended in Åre in 2006, sets out the long term strategic vision for the work of ENCORE. The Charter contains the objectives, the instruments and the priority actions of regional environmental policy in Europe.
- 4) The Ministers expressed their appreciation for the contacts between ENCORE, the EU institutions and the European headquarters of other international organisations working in the field of environment and sustainable development.
- 5) In Olsztyn Drenthe was appointed as new co-president of ENCORE. Aragon volunteered to perform the tasks of Permanent Secretariat

¹ The structure is more or less the same as the Aragon Action Plan and the Olsztyn Action Plan.

ENCORE 2012 Drenthe

- 6) The 10th ENCORE conference in Drenthe turned the focus of the conference to political discussion and the forming of political alliances between regions to tackle actual environmental problems.
- 7) This new format was accepted as format for the next conference in Bavaria 2014.
 - a) The conference agreed on seven political alliances (see paragraph 17). The continuation of the alliances, further specification of the content and delivering results is a central part of the working programme 2012-2014.
- 8) In Drenthe Bavaria was appointed as new co-president of ENCORE. Warmia Mazury volunteered to perform the tasks of Permanent Secretariat.
- 9) Memoranda of understanding were signed with NRG4 SD and Cittaslow;
 - a) Actions arising from the MoU with NRG4 SD:
 - i) To share general information, as well as to exchange experiences and good practices in the field of environment and sustainable development.
 - ii) To give mutual support during international events and forums, organized by international organizations working in the networks' field of activity.
 - iii) To participate in the events in which the other network participates or which is organized by the other network.
 - iv) To establish a regular contact between the networks, so that they are duly coordinated and they can maximize their efforts.
 - v) To identify areas of collaboration or projects which could be jointly carried out and from which both would benefit.
 - vi) And especially:
 - (1) Cooperation between ENCORE and the NRG4SD Working group Financing Climate Action in Regions.
 - (2) Cooperation between ENCORE and the NRG4SD Working Group on forests.
 - b) Actions arising from the MoU with Cittaslow:

- i) To share general information, as well as to exchange experiences and good practices in the field of environment and sustainable development.
- ii) To give mutual support during international events and forums, organized by international organizations working in the networks' field of activity.
- iii) To participate in the events in which the other network participates or which is organized by the other network.
- iv) To establish a regular contact between the networks, so that they are duly coordinated and they can maximize their efforts.
- v) To identify areas of collaboration or projects which could be jointly carried out and from which both would benefit.

II ENCORE objectives and core structure

- 10) The ENCORE Valencia Charter describes the driving motivation underpinning the work of ENCORE:

"We believe that solutions to global environmental problems can only be achieved by coordinated actions at all levels of government. In accordance with the principle "think global, act local", regional governments and regional-level solutions have much to contribute. We recognise the importance of regional differences and the opportunity to test new ideas and policies at regional level. It is important that these are taken into account in the formulation of environmental policies, both at national and EU levels".

- 11) ENCORE activities are organised by individual European Regions or by Regions jointly in alliances or otherwise under the supervision of the ENCORE Steering Group and the Steering Committee supported by the Permanent secretariat.
- a) The Steering Group currently consists of Regional Officials from 17 EU Member States Regions, who act under the direction of their Ministers. The aim of the Steering Group is to include one region of each EU Member State as a member. The Steering Group is Co-chaired by the Officials who represent the Region that will host the next Conference, together with the Region that has hosted the last Conference.
 - b) The Steering Committee is to include one minister of a region of each EU Member State as a member. The Steering Committee

is Co-chaired by the environmental ministers who represent the Region that will host the next Conference, together with the Region that has hosted the last Conference. To decide upon items at hand, at the meeting the presence of the Co-chairs and the General Secretary (representing the permanent secretariat is sufficient.

- c) The ENCORE permanent Secretariat is preferably led by the Region that will host the penultimate Conference, taking over the work of the former Region.

III ENCORE activities in general

12) ENCORE engages in the following core activities:

a) *Conferences:*

- i) The driving force of ENCORE is the biennial Conference for the regional ministers and political leaders.
- ii) Each Conference has one or more specific themes. Linked up with Conference, a progress Report is presented to the Steering Committee on the activities carried out since the last Conference.
- iii) The conference arrangements and other activities are handled by the Regions in close cooperation with the ENCORE Steering Group.

b) *Seminars, workshops, alliances and other similar activities, partnerships with other networks, research and exchange of best practice:*

To carry out activities in the period between the conferences, the leaders of the themes, alliances and other activities in the working programme will undertake actions and organize events to which politicians and administrative staff from European regions and other relevant stakeholders will be invited. Regions may also commission projects, activities and presentations under the ENCORE umbrella.

c) *Meetings of politicians*

In the period between ENCORE Conferences, regional ministers and political leaders can meet to discuss current political events. More specifically, the Co-Presidents of ENCORE and the Secretary general will convene an annual meeting of the Ministers of the Regions which are represented in the ENCORE Steering Group.

d) *Regular meetings with the EU Commissioners*

Representatives of ENCORE meet regularly with specific members of the European Commission to discuss current

political issues as well as the preparation of the next Conference.

e) *Cooperation with other European networks*

ENCORE will maintain its current collaboration (NRG4SD and Cittaslow) and seeks to collaborate with other European networks that have an interest in environmental and sustainable development issues.

f) *Website:*

The ENCORE website is the central tool for communicating these activities and for encouraging co-operation between the different partners and the exchange of experiences. The ENCORE Permanent Secretariat keeps the website up to date.

IV. ENCORE Work Programme 2012 - 2014

13) Resulting from the Conference 2012, the activities in general and other activities the following types of activities will be undertaken in the period from October 2012- May 2014.

A. Contacts with other networks, European institutions and the European headquarters of other international organisations

14) Contacts with other networks, European institutions and the European headquarters of other international organisations like the UN.

a) Initiatives on the MoU's with NRG4SD and Cittaslow.

b) Contact with The Climate Group about linking the websites.

c) Contacts with UNFCCC will be revitalised when the COP's have made considerable progress.

d) Continuing 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 will pursue these matters with the relevant European institutions. There are a number of other bodies with an EU-wide mandate which includes environmental and sustainable development matters. The Steering Group co-operates with such bodies if this could lead to benefits for the sustainable development work in the Regions of Europe.²

². Examples include: the Environmental Platform of the Regional Offices (EPRO), the Assembly of European Regions (AER), the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), the Council of Europe, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe

e) Presence at conferences, congresses, workshops which are considered to be worthwhile.

B. Implementation and monitoring of ENCORE decisions

15) ENCORE conference decisions. The ENCORE 2012 Conference agreed on the execution of political decisions concerning the alliances. Putting the alliances into action is the responsibility of the leading regions. The Steering Group will monitor the progress and report to the Steering Committee.

C. The ENCORE Valencia Charter

16) Promoting the ENCORE Valencia Charter
The Permanent Secretariat will be the depository of the ENCORE Valencia Charter. The list of Regions that have signed the Charter is published at the website and kept up to date. The Permanent Secretariat will contact the other Regions and invite them to sign the Charter.

D. Alliances and similar activities, workshops, exchange of best practices

17) Alliances, seminars, workshops, partnerships with other networks, research and exchange of best practice

a) Alliances

i) Best practises on climate change especially the defence against flooding; leading regions **Utrecht** (The Netherlands) and **Bavaria** (Germany).

ii) Interreg proposal about the protection against the rise of the sea level; leading region **Västra Götaland** (Sweden).

iii) Interaction between youths and adults concerning public support for sustainable energy and sustainability; leading region **Friesland** (The Netherlands) (and **Drenthe** (The Netherlands)).

iv) Exploring the possibilities of the Genuine Progress Indicator; leading region **North Ostrobothnia** (Finland).

(CLRAE), Eurocities, the Conference of Peripheral and Maritime Regions in Europe (CPMR), the International Council on Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), European Network of Environmental Agencies (ENEA) and the Network of European Regions on Education for Sustainability (RES), Euro Region Baltic (ERB), Euro Region Adriatic (ERA).

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- v) Influencing EU Policies and legislation; primarily the topic of Air Quality; leading region: **Styria** (Austria).
- vi) Creating a network on the exchange of experiences regarding the chain from production to the use of biogas and its promotion; leading region **Västra Götaland** (Sweden).
- vii) Freshwater reserves; leading region **Drenthe** (The Netherlands).

Apart from these alliances other promising initiatives were taken and agreed upon:

- viii) About the issues of waste management, re-use and resource efficiency contacts were established between the Polish regions of **Warmia-Mazury**, Mazovia and Wielskopolska, Carinthia (Austria) and Utrecht (The Netherlands).
- ix) **Central Denmark Region** (Denmark) offered to break down the extensive topic of climate adaptation into smaller parts, which can be discussed with ENCORE signatories whether or not in combination with the alliance on youth participation.
- x) **Wallonia** (Belgium) requests collaboration on the items the Green Win Competitiveness Cluster (core objective is to reduce the environmental imprint of human activities), Land consolidation (How to redesign land consolidation as a multifunctional tool; exchange of information about the evolution of land consolidation) and Invasive Alien Species (a proposal on BENELUX cooperation on early warning and risk prioritization in the multi-annual programme).

Results will be realized and presented during the next ENCORE conference in 2014

- b) Cooperation on Biodiversity
Contacts will be established with ECNC and UNEP to see if more active regions can be linked to the activities of ECNC and UNEP.
- c) Workshops and exchange of best practises
The Regions are invited to present initiatives under the ENCORE umbrella and report about them to the Steering Group

E. ENCORE organization

- 18) Steering Group, Steering Committee and tripartite consultation
 - a) Steering Group
 - i) The Steering Group meets twice a year. In 2013 in spring in Göteborg, in the beginning of autumn in Düsseldorf. The

Steering Group monitors the progress of the action plan and the results of the alliances.

- ii) The Steering Committee meets at least once a year. In 2013 it is combined with a meeting with EU commissioner Oettinger.
- iii) At least once a year a tripartite meeting of the co-chairs and the General secretary takes place about the progress of the ENCORE network.

Action Programme: to be concretized taking into account the results of the ENCORE Steering Group Meeting in Göteborg in April 2013.