



# Firenze, Encore 2004

*6<sup>th</sup> Environment Conference of the Regions of Europe*

**A better world is possible:  
the contribution of the regions**

*Sustainable production & consumption:  
regional strategies*

**Florence Action Plan**

**2 April 2004**

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## The Florence Action Plan – ENCORE 2004

### **General remarks**

1. At the 6<sup>th</sup> Environmental Conference of the Regions of Europe (ENCORE 2004) held in Florence on April 1–2, 2004, the participating Regions reaffirmed their commitment to pursuing measures recommended in the Valencia Charter and the ENCORE Resolutions<sup>1</sup>, to improve the environment and promote sustainable development.
2. After five successful ENCORE Conferences, the Regions believe that the work of ENCORE in influencing the progress of environmental and sustainable development issues in Europe should not be restricted to biennial events but include activities during the periods in between Conferences.
3. The Conference also expressed its firm commitment to monitoring the implementation of ENCORE decisions, taking the results of the Villach Resolution Review presented at ENCORE 2004 as a starting point.
4. Drawing on the outcomes of previous ENCORE Conferences, the Regions stressed the importance of clarifying and institutionalising permanent contacts with other European networks and with European institutions. Regular exchanges with global

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1. Brussels Resolution (1993); Valencia Resolution and Valencia Charter (1995); Göteborg Resolution (1997); Wexford Resolution (1999); Villach Resolution (2001)



networks for environmental and sustainable development issues were seen as useful by the Regions.

5. On May 1, 2004 ten new Member States will join the European Union. The Regions envisaged an important role for ENCORE in helping to establish partnerships between "old" and "new" Regions to share best practice on environmental and sustainable development issues.

6. The Conference instructed the Steering Group to supervise a series of initiatives to be undertaken in the period 2004-2006 as part of a long term strategic vision of the work of ENCORE.

### **ENCORE objectives and core structure**

7. The Valencia Charter sets out the objectives of ENCORE:

- a. to participate actively in the development of new policies, strategies and methods for implementing environmental policies and sustainable development in the Regions of Europe, and
- b. to establish a framework for the development of co-operation and exchange of experiences between the Regions, with special regard to involving the Regions of the new member states in this co-operation.

8. Through ENCORE, the Regions want to enhance their role in the development and implementation of environmental and sustainable development policies at the regional, national, European and international level.

9. ENCORE guarantees monitoring, visibility and follow-up of its activities by providing the following core structure:



*Conferences:*

The driving force of ENCORE is the biennial conference for the regional environment ministers. The conference will seek to debate sustainable development issues with a special emphasis on taking forward matters from its work programme as well as following up of decisions from the last conference.

The conference arrangements and other activities will be handled by a Steering Group with members from regions in as many Member States as possible.

*Seminars, workshops, (virtual) working groups and research projects:*

To carry out activities in between the conferences, the leaders of the different themes in the work programme will organise workshops, seminars or (virtual) working groups to which politicians and administrative staff from European regions and other relevant stakeholders will be invited. Regions may also commission research projects under the ENCORE umbrella.

*Web site:*

The web site will be a central tool for communicating these activities, and encouraging co-operation between the different partners and the exchange of experiences.

**ENCORE strategy**

10. At the ENCORE Conference in Florence in April 2004 the following strategy was adopted by the Regions:

- to strengthen the environment and sustainable development throughout Europe by promoting Agenda 21 at a 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 a regional level and to involve educational and research institutions in this co-operation 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 6<sup>th</sup> Environmental Action Programme and ensure that the practical experience of the Regions in implementing EU law is reflected in the future work of the Community.

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

### **ENCORE priorities 2004 - 2006**

11. The Conference agreed to the following priority actions for ENCORE for the period 2004 - 2006:
- Revising of the Valencia Charter.
  - Organising seminars and other events to communicate innovative and effective policies on sustainable production and consumption and on climate change.
  - Turning ENCORE into a forum to communicate ideas and best practice on other sustainable development issues.
  - Organising an annual meeting between ENCORE and the European Commissioner for Environment.



- Cooperating with other EU-wide networks which have an interest in environmental and sustainable development issues.
- Exploring opportunities for cooperating with EU officials in the preparation of policies, plans and indicators in the field of environment and sustainable development.
- Establishing partnerships between EU Regions and Regions from the Accession Countries to facilitate the implementation of EU environmental law in the new Regions.

### **ENCORE Work Programme 2004 - 2006**

12. The Florence Conference highlighted the special importance of sustainable production and consumption and the challenge of climate change. The conference encouraged the Regions of Europe to adopt innovative and effective policies in these areas and to work with the Steering Group to communicate these policies to other Regions of Europe, associations of regions in member states, national environment ministries and other public bodies, particularly the European Institutions. It is envisaged that seminars, (virtual) working groups and other activities will be an appropriate means of achieving such communication and all Regions of Europe are invited to contact the Steering Group with their ideas for such ENCORE events.

13. ENCORE has the opportunity to become a forum to communicate ideas and best practice on other sustainable development issues. The Steering Group was asked to consider other priority areas and to work with the Regions to develop new ENCORE initiatives.

14. Six areas of work were identified:



- I. Contacts with other networks and European institutions
- II. Activities related to the implementation and monitoring of decisions taken by ENCORE .
- III. Revising the Valencia Charter
- IV. Seminars, workshops, (virtual) working groups and research on specific themes.
- V. Activities related to the setting up of partnerships between "old" and "new" Regions.
- VI. Activities related to the preparation of the next Conference.

#### **I. Contacts with other networks and European institutions**

14.1 It is important that the experience of the Regions of Europe in implementing environmental and sustainable development legislation and other measures is reflected prominently in policy discussions in the Member States and in the European Union. The Conference welcomes the meeting of ministers from ENCORE Regions led by the Environment Minister of Tuscany Franci with Commissioner Wallström which took place in October 2003. The Conference asked the Steering Group to seek to organise such meetings with the Commissioner each year in cooperation with the host of the next ENCORE Conference.

There is a number of 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.<sup>2</sup>

Similarly, the Conference supported the idea to have regular exchanges to strengthen relations between ENCORE and the global Network of regional governments for sustainable development (nrg4SD), created at the UN World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg in 2002, in order to promote participation by ENCORE Regions in international partnerships for sustainable development, the so-called Type 2 outcomes of WSSD.

The Regions of Europe should seek 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 European Commission.

## **II. Implementation and monitoring of ENCORE decisions**

14.2 The Florence Conference asked the Regions of Europe to contribute actively to the monitoring of activities carried out by the Regions in the fields of IPP and climate change. The Steering Group was asked to determine how monitoring of ENCORE decisions and work in the Regions on chosen themes can be carried out, and to implement monitoring mechanisms which give a good picture of regional activity and performance, without giving the ENCORE Steering Group an unrealistic number of tasks or task complexity.

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2. Examples include: the Environmental Platform of the Regional Offices (EPRO), the Committee of the Regions (CoR), 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 (CLRAE), Eurocities, the Conference of Peripheral and Maritime Regions in Europe (CPMR), and the International Council on Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI).





Simple monitoring measures should be created. The Villach Resolution Review was accepted by ENCORE 2004 as an example of such a monitoring mechanism. It will be fine-tuned and further elaborated for future Review processes.

### **III. Integrating and updating the Valencia Charter**

14.3 The Conference agreed to the formation of a virtual working group, reporting to the Steering Group, comprising representatives of the following Regions, to review the Valencia Charter:

- Valencia
- Basque Country
- Carinthia
- Tuscany

The Working Group is asked to integrate parts of the Encore Resolutions into the Charter and to update the Charter to include the outcome of recent international developments to make sure that the Charter contains all the basic principles of ENCORE.

The revised draft will be distributed to all Regions of Europe and adopted at a special event of ENCORE in 2005, Valencia +10.

### **IV. Seminars, workshops, (virtual) working groups and research on specific themes and topics**

14.4 Climate change and Integrated Product Policy (IPP) are two central themes of the work programme. So are the areas for action recommended by the Villach Resolution Review: sustainable development strategies; eco-efficiency activities; green purchasing



policies and practices; auditing of sustainable development efforts; comparable sustainability indicators.

The Regions are invited to identify other themes and present other initiatives they would like to develop under the ENCORE umbrella, in particular in relation to the implementation of the Valencia Charter and of the ENCORE Resolutions, to the ENCORE Steering Group. So far, the following activities have been announced:

### **Thematic seminars/workshops**

#### **1. Soil protection.**

*Leading region:* Bavaria, DE

*Objective:* The objective of the workshop “European Strategy of Soil Protection” held in Brussels on 29<sup>th</sup> of April 2004 is to present and discuss current activities in Europe in light of the new EU Thematic Strategy for Soil Protection. The workshop will concentrate on three issues: site management, site recycling and soil information and monitoring systems. In Bavaria, various initiatives and projects to support sustainable land use have been carried out. These activities, as well as best practices from selected member States, will be presented and discussed at the workshop.

*Date and place:* Brussels, 29<sup>th</sup> of April 2004

*Activities:* Seminar on the new EU soil protection policy. One participant (political level) from each Steering Group Region (due to limited number of participants).

#### **2. Partnerships with Businesses.**

*Leading region:* Vejle Amt, DK

*Objective:* To establish partnerships between businesses and public authorities at both tactical/ strategic level and at an operational



level. The action will focus on involving and empowering SMEs in environmental initiatives and voluntary agreements. The public sector cannot deliver sustainable development on its own. Business has a vital role to play and much has already been achieved. The initiative should involve the sharing of experience between regions to ensure that regions benefit from the findings of others

*Date and place:* Vejle, September 2004.

*Activities:* Vejle Region will set up a workshop on this issue

### **3. IPP seminar.**

*Leading region:* Baden-Wuerttemberg, DE

*Objective:* IPP, as described in the EU greenpaper and the EU communication, is a rather abstract concept. Different regions in Europe have initiated innovative IPP pilot projects to bring this new strategy to life. The seminar offers a platform for EU regions to present their approach to IPP and share their experiences made so far in model projects.

*Date and place:* October 2004, Brussels

*Activities:* The Ministry of Environment and Transport, of Baden-Wuerttemberg, together with other regions represented in the SG, will present IPP model projects.

### **4. Integrated river-basin management seminar.**

*Leading regions:* Aragon and Catalonia, ES  
Emilia-Romagna and Tuscany, IT

*Objective:* The idea is to approach the river-basin as a system, in the context of regional implementation of the EU water framework directive, integrating the spatial dimension, the ecological aspects and the economic activities involving all the different stakeholders.



*Date and place:* second half of 2005, place to be announced  
(Aragon is offering to host the event).

*Activities:* It is proposed to start a virtual working group on the subject of integrated river-basin management in order to prepare the seminar. The outcome of the seminar will be: exchange of best practice; elaboration of common guide lines; launching of pilot projects in which the guidelines are applied.

The Regions that have a special knowledge and interest in the specific fields are leading the activities of the selected themes. They will seek co-operation with regions that could complement the activities in different ways and organise activities dealing with its theme.

### **Thematic (virtual) working groups**

The working groups are asked to define a work programme and set measurable objectives.

#### **1. Virtual working group on environmental and sustainable development indicators**

*Leading region:* Basque Country, ES

*Objective:* to collect information about existing regional indicators and study the possibility to apply

*Activities:* Benchmarking between regions on indicators. Prepare a draft proposal on common regional environmental and sustainable development indicators by the end of 2004. The suggestion is to use the encore website to present existing regional environmental and sustainable development indicators in order to prepare the draft proposal.



**2. Virtual working group on the Reform of the EU Structural and cohesion funds 2007-2013 (financing of regional activities on environment and sustainable development)**

*Leading region:* Tuscany, IT

*Objective:* to make sure that environment and sustainable development are adequately integrated in the new EU policy and to understand the opportunities for the Regions in the new policy of the EU Commission to finance activities on environment and sustainable development.

*Activities:* Tuscany region is proposing to start a working group on this topic, to work together with the EU Commission to study the opportunities and to inform the Regions of ENCORE.

**3. Virtual working group on climate change**

*Leading region:* North Rhine Westphalia

*Objective:* to develop and refine Regional strategies and to share best practice.

*Activities:* sharing information on best practice using the ENCORE website; identifying projects with a common interest. To comment EU legislation on this topic.

**Thematic Research Projects**

**1. Research project on Regional competences in the Member States**

*Leading region:* Tuscany, IT

*Objective:* To analyse the competences of the Regions in the different Member States in the field of environment and sustainable development.



*Activities:* Finance two year comparative research project coordinated by the European University Institute, involving possibly other research institutions and resulting in a Conference on this topic hosted in Florence or in ENCORE 2006.

#### **V. Partnerships between “old” and “new” Regions**

14.5 The Regions were asked to continue to improve contacts with and start new partnerships with Regions from the new member states. The Steering Group was asked to ensure that Regions from new member states are represented in the ENCORE Steering Group

#### **VI. Preparation of ENCORE 2006 – Jämtland, Sweden**

14.6 The Conference welcomed the offer of the Swedish region of Jämtland to host the next ENCORE conference in 2006 and asked the ENCORE Steering Group to work with Jämtland to organise a successful conference.

The organizers were asked to consider scheduling parallel discussion groups during the ENCORE 2006 Conference for participating ministers and political leaders.

15. The Steering Group was asked to keep the Regions of Europe informed of the progress on all these issues through the ENCORE website, e-mail and other forms of communication. The Steering Group was asked to produce a full report on its work in 2004-2006 at the next conference in Jämtland in 2006. This report should also include its proposals for the following two years. These proposals are to be debated and agreed upon at the next conference.

16. The SG was asked to present a development plan for the organisation and coordination of ENCORE activities to the ENCORE



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Conference in 2006 in Jämtland. This plan should include possible alternatives for the establishment of secretariat functions.

Adopted by the Environmental Conference of the Regions of Europe (ENCORE), Florence, Tuscany, April 2, 2004



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Members of the ENCORE Steering Group:

Basque Country, Spain  
Bavaria, Germany  
Carinthia, Austria  
Friuli Venezia Giulia, Italy  
Groningen, Netherlands  
Jämtland County Council, Sweden (host of ENCORE 2006)  
Pirkanmaa Regional Environment Centre, Finland  
Scotland, United Kingdom  
South East Regional Authority, Ireland  
Tuscany, Italy (host of ENCORE 2004)  
Västra Götaland, Sweden  
Vejle Region, Denmark  
Wallonie, Belgium