

## **ENCORE'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE EXPO (WATER TRIBUNE)**

### **ENCORE DECLARATION - ZARAGOZA CHARTER**

#### **COMMITMENT OF THE EUROPEAN REGIONS TO WATER IN THE XXI CENTURY**

During the 8th Environment Conference of the Regions of Europe (ENCORE 2008) held in Zaragoza, Aragon, on 26-27 June 2008, the participating Regions affirmed their commitment to a new vision of water management in the XXI century. The Regions will work together to make sure that water quantity and water quality are guaranteed as part of a sustainable development strategy in Europe and with a view to combating the foreseeable effects of climate change.

Water is considered the XXI century's "blue gold" and its rational use has become one of the most severe problems of this century for humanity.

In recent years it has become clear how vulnerable European countries with low rainfall can be. Drought episodes have reduced available water, giving rise to dried-up rivers and reservoirs, and a reduction in water quality. In Europe, the availability of water will be affected by climate change and the worst effects will be observed in the driest regions. Excessive rainfall in other Regions has led to frequent flooding problems that also require coordinated action.

The Regions value the work of the European institutions and national governments. However, it is important to remember that regional and local authorities are responsible for a large part of the implementation of EU and national legislation. Moreover, due to the fact that Regions are close to the citizens they are well placed to work together with civil society and as an intermediary between (inter)national and local authorities. By sharing experiences, the Regions can make an important contribution to global climate change policies. The decisive value of the work of the Regions lies in the effective and efficient implementation of policies.

The European Regions that participate in ENCORE 2008, confirm that they will work towards the following objectives:

- Stimulate technological innovation and technology transfer as effective instruments of environmental management of the XXI century;
- Improve collaboration between the European regions as well as cooperation between the public and private sector;
- Improve the exchange of experiences in the area of water management and climate change, and make sure that cross-sectoral solutions are pursued.
- Intensify the mechanisms of social participation, in order to reach the best sustainable solutions from a social, environmental and economic point of view.

Accordingly, the European Regions that attended the ENCORE 2008 Conference commit themselves to promoting the sustainable use of water resources to satisfy the needs of the present generation, without putting in danger the supply for future ones and formulate collaborative scenarios between the Regions for the exchange of information and knowledge on this subject and for the development of interregional projects. The European Regions will support the international recognition of access to sufficient water resources as a human right and are committed to contributing to the implementation of the UN Millennium Development Goals.

To this end, the undersigned European Regions declare the need to improve scientific and technical knowledge about the following topics:

- The effects of the most significant contaminants, both existing and emerging, and the problems they cause, as well as their use, control and elimination;
- Scenarios of water resources availability and adaptation measures;
- The impact of new water management criteria on regional development;
- The cleaning and restoration of aquatic ecosystems;
- The reduction of pollution and water consumption in all sectors;
- The techniques for creating models capable of predicting extreme hydrological incidents;
- Adequate planning of present and future uses of water resources that maintain a balance between offer and demand.

This is all with a view to guaranteeing sustainable development and sufficient water for all European citizens.

Zaragoza (Aragon), 27<sup>th</sup> June 2008