

Valencia Charter

Established in Valencia, Spain, 21st November 1995

Revised and approved in Åre, Sweden, 16th June 2006

Revised and approved in Hohenkammer, Germany, 16th May 2014

1. Role of the Regions in Environmental Policy

- 1.1 We, the regions of Europe are convinced that the citizens of all regions of Europe have the right to enjoy a high quality environment. We declare that in views of our common responsibilities for the protection of the environment for present and future generations, we consider the pursuit of sustainable development and the development of environment policies are our main tasks.
- 1.2 We believe the solution 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. We, therefore, focus on an active cooperation of the regions of Europe.
- 1.3 We believe that we, as “competent authorities”, with deep practical experience in implementing and executing European law and the strategy of sustainable development should be involved in the process of designing new European environmental policies including the arrangements for implementation. In carrying out these tasks, we wish to be active participants, reflecting our aim to play a proactive role and involving our experience, knowledge and interests in the European decision-making process.

2. Objectives and Instruments

- 2.1 We, the regions of-Europe, recognize that the fundamental objective of our environmental polices is to conserve, protect and improve the quality of the environment – climate, air, noise, water, soil and biodiversity. In doing so, we consider the precautionary principle and the polluter-pays principle as the guiding principles in all our actions.
- 2.2 We pursue sustainable development. It is important that the Strategy Europe 2020 gives equal treatment to economic, environmental and social needs. We refer to the European Strategy of Sustainable Development and we are committed to an economic management focussing on ecological sustainability, economic profitability and social integration.
- 2.3 We believe that open structures need to be established in all regions to enable the active participation of citizens in the development of environmental policy and to ensure better implementation and monitoring. To consider the importance of future generations, we encourage the active involvement of the youth.
- 2.4 Government must set an example for others to follow. In undertaking our work, we are committed to minimizing of the negative environmental impacts we create.
- 2.5 In pursuing environmental protection and sustainable development, we the regions of Europe will use all the available instruments, such as:
- legislation,
 - coordination of the different public policies,
 - information systems,
 - market tools,
 - education and training
 - co-operation with partners,
 - voluntary agreements.

In order to broadcast our knowledge, we pursue the exchange of best practices within environmental alliances between the regions of Europe.

- 2.6 We are committed to put into practice the contents of the action plans adopted at ENCORE Conferences periodically evaluating the achievements attained to promote sustainable growth.

3. Co-operation with partners

- 3.1 We encourage all European regions to join the ENCORE network and invite them to bring their ideas and make their contribution to the work of Europe's regions in creating a sustainable environmental policy for Europe. We, regions of Europe, recognise the importance of exchanging regional experiences for solving global environmental problems. We invite all regions to take part actively in the environmental alliances agreed by ENCORE.
- 3.2 We are aware of our responsibility towards future generations. We will therefore also actively solicit the perspectives of young people to identify and refine core issues and solutions.
- 3.3 We invite representatives of the European Commission and other EU Institutions and organisms to work in co-operation with ENCORE in this policy.
- 3.4 To strengthen the environment and sustainable development throughout Europe, we shall co-operate with citizens, organizations, business, other levels of government and other social and economic partners.

4. Final Provisions

- 4.1 This Charter will be deposited at the ENCORE secretariat. A copy of this Charter is available at the ENCORE-Website (www.encoreweb.org).
- 4.2 All regions of Europe are encouraged to send confirmation of their accession to the Charter to the ENCORE secretariat.
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4.3 The Charter will be applied for an unlimited period of time. However, it can be revised in the following “Environmental Conferences of the Regions of Europe, ENCORE”.

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