

**Contribution to the debate on the regional and local  
dimension written by Mr. Adrian Severin, MP (Romania),  
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Whenever one decides to build a house, he/she will try to secure primarily the foundation of the building. One cannot have a stable and long lasting house with only walls and roof. The same is valid for the European Union. One should think not only to the European and national levels, but also to the regional and local levels that eventually represent the foundation of the Union. In order to have the Union closer to the citizens we should engage the regions as relevant actors in our European undertaking. In this respect, the purpose should be not to create new regions but to give a role to those regions that emerged following a certain objective need. One does not intend to regionalize Europe; one should Europeanize the regions.

In this respect, some constitutional revisions should be taken in consideration. Overall, I support the proposals of Napolitano's report on the role of regional and local authorities in European integration.

1. An essential part of the concept of prosperity is the territorial development. It deals with ensuring a balanced distribution of economic activities and resources among the member states. In this respect, Europe must establish appropriate institutional mechanisms for guarantying the balanced development of all territorial entities that will form the future Union. (the territorial cohesion). Therefore I support the insertion of the objective "to promote territorial cohesion" in the article which describes the Union's objectives.
2. The present division into two levels of competence – the communitarian one and the state one - must be also extended to such a point as to cover the regional and local levels and eventually the euro-regional level as well, since there are areas - such as the preservation of cultural identity - that could ask for complex relations of subsidiarity. Therefore, I support the insertion in the articles of the new Constitutional Treaty references to the responsibilities of the local and regional authorities. Of course, the authorities of the concerned states should establish the status of each of these regions (including their legislative competences, if any).
3. Among the fundamental rights and freedoms of the European citizens, the Constitutional Treaty should provide for the right to "cultural diversity". A certain way of life characterized by a capacity to enjoy or at least to accept the cultural diversity, could become another element of cohesion for an emerging "European society". Therefore, I support the introduction of an article referring to the respect and promotion of the linguistic diversity in Europe as an expression of the cultural diversity (the new Article 151a TCE in the Napolitano's report).
4. Along with the territorial cohesion, the UE should encourage the concept of "the frontier of communication" to replace "the frontier of separation" both within the Union (notably between the old and new member states) and between the Union and its near neighbors (both internal and external frontiers). Therefore, I support a new third paragraph to be added at the end of the present Article 158 ECT as proposed in Napolitano's report.

5. One way to strengthen the rights of the European citizens is to give to the Committee of Regions and regions themselves, where it is the case, the right to appeal to the Court of Justice on matters regarding the violation of the principle of subsidiarity. In this way, the law-case of the Court of Justice on subsidiarity would be developed. This would help to have the interpretation of the principle of subsidiarity more legal, thus more operational. Therefore, the right of the CoR and regions to appeal to the CJ should be recognized by the Constitutional Treaty.
6. I also support the idea to add at the end of Article 211 of the present EC Treaty a new indent as proposed in Napolitano's report in order to engage, along with the Member States, the local and regional authorities in the partnership with the Commission when the latter takes measures to implement common policies.
7. In the spirit of transparency and respect for the partners, it is necessary that the Council and the Commission should adopt a reasoned report on the measures taken in response to opinions delivered by the Committee of the Region. This idea should also be included in the Constitutional Treaty.
8. I also support the consolidation of the present Article 299(2) of the EC Treaty that concerns the outermost regions.