



More regionalism, more Europe!

Policy paper to be presented, amended and voted during the General Assembly 2009, Maastricht.

Brought in by the Executive Committee

We, the Federation of Young European Greens, gathered in our General Assembly 2009 in Maastricht, want to make clear the urgency of rethinking Europe. In this time of global crisis (economical, ecological and social) we acknowledge that EU must play a crucial role in providing an effective answer to the current and future world wide problems and challenges. However, we are also aware that the European construction is facing an identity crisis, due to the perceived distance between citizens and the institutions that frame our every day lives. Therefore, in order for European institutions to gain legitimacy to contribute to world's governance, we find it crucial for them to bring their decision making closer to citizens. And this means, according to subsidiarity principle of decisions being made at the proper political level, bringing the decisions affecting daily life of people as close as possible to them. And this means, among other aspects, empowering the regions and giving their governments the tools to apply the common European legislative framework to the actual reality and specific context of their territory. Therefore, we , FYEG, defend the following:

Regionalism is necessary. European integration is continuously evolving and thus the objectives of the EU need to be redefined to give answer to new challenges of a changing world. Nowadays, with twenty seven countries the European Union covers more policy area than ever before; however the organization of the EU has not been structurally reformed since its extension. Hence, a real democratic structure must be implemented, including a real representation of regions. We are convinced that reinforcing regions, together with reinforcing European and global networks, is the best way to create a true green, social and democratic reform. Proximity politics offer a framework of better accountability on decision making that leads to more effective policies.

Regionalism is a right. Europe has great diversity that reaches far beyond state borders. The patchwork of cultural, natural and historical regions is what forms the European identity. Therefore, European unity lies in acknowledging and empowering its diversity. People have the right to speak their own language, learn about their own history in schools, and be able to live their own culture and traditions. It is a community's right to feel part of a nation, without the denial of its existence and to decide its own political framework, rules and future.

The great diversity of regions is the hidden richness of Europe. Furthermore, regions, nations, countries and states are concepts in constant evolution. Europe's dynamic political history, including the use of the right to self determination, has depicted the continent as we know it today. This has changed the way that citizens relate to each other to a point where the main goal for the development of our society is a more participative democracy through more empowered

38 regions. Acknowledging the path that has built our present reality is the way to break mental
39 barriers in shaping our future.

40 The claim of historic nations over centuries for self government and autonomy has led to some
41 achievements. Although there is still a lot more to be accomplished, these should be a reference
42 for other regions that still strive for a higher recognition and more competences (e.g. legislative
43 power or tax autonomy). Regions and historical nations should cooperate and work together to
44 exchange best practices for mutual and collective benefit. Empowering regions is empowering
45 Europe.

46 Regionalism is about looking to the future, not only preserving the past. Conserving the culture,
47 language and heritage of them is actually important. Nevertheless, we think that the region is
48 also the best tool between the citizens and Europe; for defending human rights, applying green
49 policies and giving a human feel Europe. Having autonomy on the regional level is the best way
50 for having a root – basing policies on economic affairs, protection of the environment and social
51 justice, developing them not top down but bottom up instead. All this is connected to a new
52 understanding of a word in the EU agenda - subsidiarity. For us subsidiarity implies proximity,
53 democracy and a local approach. In a multilevel democracy the most important thing is enlarging
54 consensus as much as possible, being inclusive with all the layers that serve the citizens.

55 In order for the regions to be empowered and fairly represented they must have binding decision-
56 making capacities within the EU institutions. On the other hand we believe that the EU deserves
57 real and properly defined legislative and executive powers in order to be a proper and clear
58 democratic institution and achieve a real People's Europe. In this sense, democratic parties
59 should view regionalism as a chance for a brighter and deeper democratic system in order to
60 consolidate the role of the peoples in decision making in the whole structure of the European
61 Union.

62 Regionalism does not exclude any other feeling or belief. It is a positive movement that
63 contributes to the exchange and enjoyment of diversity. Inclusion of newcomers in the local
64 community, making them participants of cultural heritage and language is one of the most recent
65 challenges, especially for regions and historic nations. Transmitting to the new generations the
66 humanistic background of the peoples of Europe -with its inherited culture, values and defence of
67 human rights- must not compromise respect of diversity and will adapt to new times.

68 Finally, regionalism should go hand in hand with the globalization process: the alter globalization.
69 We also should view Europe as a region in the world and take in to account its relations across
70 the globe when reinventing itself. A Europe more conscious about its diversity is a Europe more
71 responsible towards the world.

72 Therefore, we, the Federation of Young European Greens commit to strive for the following:

73 We need an inclusive regionalism, as opposed to a narrow minded and offensive approach.
74 Regionalist movements look resolutely to the future, while being conscious of its past and
75 experiences.

76 We state our clear support for the right to self determination for people around the world. More
77 than a simple right, the will of people to stand together and to share a common destiny is an
78 obvious factor for personal involvement in political decisions and public life. We stand for
79 humanized politics, against the macroeconomic drivers ruling nowadays. That could be eased by
80 more autonomy for regions and nations and respect for the right to self determination.

81 We urge for real and strong international cooperation in order to effectively face the global
82 challenges empowering regions will enable a grass root approach and easier implementation on

83 a local level of measures for fighting against global environmental and social problems, which
84 necessarily must be globally addressed. Actions must be coordinated through effective and
85 democratic institutions at different inter-entity levels.

86 We believe it is essential that regions have binding legislative capacities within the EU
87 institutions. At present the Regions have no decision making capacities within the EU institutions.
88 This often results in states taking decisions on aspects of policy without a proper level of
89 knowledge. We believe that regions must have their say in the construction and policy making of
90 the EU instead of it being dictated exclusively by the member states.