Concerning Commission staff working paper “Ongoing and systematic dialogue with local government associations”

Dear Mr. Kinnock,

We write you on behalf of the Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania in order to comment on the draft paper on an ongoing and systematic dialogue with local government associations. ALAL is the national association of local authorities in Lithuania representing the common interests of all 60 municipalities in the country.

ALAL welcomes the ongoing efforts to create a systematic dialogue between the Commission and the local authorities in Europe. We also welcome the draft working paper stressing that: “the only feasible choice of body for prior consultation on policy decisions are the national and European local-government associations”.

ALAL recognise the role of the Committee of the Regions in the European decision-making process and we appreciate the suggestion of an annual presentation of the Commission’s work programme to be organized by the Committee of the Regions. We fully welcome an annual meeting with the individual Directorate Generals on the same basis.

In spite of that, ALAL would like to draw your attention to AND propose the next:

- It is proposed in the draft paper, that discussions and presentations will be done mostly on the already prepared documents. In that case Associations will not be able to influence them in the efficient way. That’s why we propose, that the drafts of the documents which could have major impact on the local self-government in the member states should be discussed direct with the associations at an early pre-legislative stage.
In such a way the Commission could realise declared principle of “using the knowledge and the experience” of the local governments in the member states.

- ALAL in Lithuania came into agreement with the Government, that all the drafts of legal acts concerning local self-government in Lithuania a being negotiated with our Association. This system is functioning relatively successfully in our country and we suggest the Commission to use it as an example “of good practice” in the process of preparing of this document.
- We also propose that the Committee of the Regions could take the role of the “information filter” in the way of the filtering of these big flows of information coming from the Commission and submitting to the Associations only these drafts of the documents which could have the major influence on the local self-government. This would be a great help for all the associations, because most of them will not have enough capabilities to do this job in the efficient way.

In conclusion we’d like to say, that ALAL fully supports the initiative launched by the Commission and express its hope, that our proposals will be taken into account and the effective system of the dialogue with the local government associations will be created.

Sincerely Yours

Director
Sigitas Siupšinskas