The English Regions Network (ERN) is a grouping of all regional Assemblies in England. The Assemblies are made up of local government leaders and other senior economic, environmental and social partners. The Assemblies act as voices of the English regions and have a key role in regional development and planning, including transport policy. Directly elected assemblies may be established in some regions over the next few years.

The Assemblies come together through the ERN ‘To act as a collective voice to influence national and European policies in the interests of the English regions’. The ERN has three key roles:

- Engaging central government (and other key regional, national and European bodies)
- Sharing best practice and developing a common agenda between Regional Assemblies
- Promoting devolution & regional working.

The ERN’s response to the European Commission’s paper:

1) We welcome the European Commission’s initiative. English regions wish to continue and enhance their active contribution to the European Union and its policies.

2) If the Commission is to achieve the aim of “a more systematic dialogue national associations of regional and local government at an early stage of policy shaping”, then the ERN would ask to be involved as a formal consultee.
This in no way detracts from the need for the Local Government Association to also be consulted in the UK. It represents local government whereas the ERN represents regions. Therefore, both bodies should be consulted in the UK.

3) For consultation on policy development to be truly “ongoing and systematic”, we ask that consultation should extend beyond the annual and other formal meetings suggested in paragraph 4 of the Commission’s paper. More continuous and informal contacts should also be used.

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