



FORUM OF GLOBAL ASSOCIATIONS OF REGIONS  
FORUM GLOBAL D'ASSOCIATIONS DE REGIONS  
FORO GLOBAL DE ASOCIACIONES DE REGIONES

6, rue Saint-Martin 35700 RENNES - F  
Tel. : + 33 (0)2 99 35 40 50 - Fax : + 33 (0)2 99 35 09 19  
e.mail : [secretariat@crpm.org](mailto:secretariat@crpm.org) - web : [www.crpm.org](http://www.crpm.org)

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## GLOBALISATION AND TERRITORIES

# FOGAR: TOWARDS COLLABORATIVE RESPONSES FROM THE REGIONS

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### I. Focusing on the global/local: a consequence of globalisation

The international context is undergoing radical and increasingly rapid change, forcing societies and citizens to adapt ever more quickly if they do not want to be left on the sidelines with regard to these changes that are shaping the world. Territories and their citizens are not equal in the face of these changes, these asymmetric shocks. Despite the increasing influence of the economic and financial spheres, it is still today, and probably will be for a long time, the States that are the major actors in regulating change and possible adaptations. However, these States can no longer act on their own and in a unilateral manner when proposing and implementing solutions in response to this new and shifting situation, especially in the face of market forces whose only rationale is their own interest, and where the general interest, that of citizens, is relegated to second place. As a result, new spaces are opening up in which to reflect on, negotiate, make decisions about and manage the new challenges which cannot be regulated solely at the level of a State, nor even solely through intergovernmental cooperation.

The responses that have been in existence for some time and which are now adapting themselves to the changing situation, as well as the new responses that are emerging, are for the most part situated at a supra-national level.

The European Union is the most complete example of such a response. Built up gradually since 1951 (creation of the European Coal and Steel Community) it today numbers 27 Member States; this may rise to 30 in the future. These States have all agreed to relinquish part of their sovereignty in the service of an economic and social project, a project for a society, that has been unique up until now. This project is at present at a crossroads, challenged by a globalisation that will eventually force it either to become stronger or to disappear. The debate is far from being closed. Other continental or sub-continental groupings have emerged (NAFTA, MERCOSUR, ASEAN, UEMOA, etc.)

The WTO is another form of organised response, a way of accompanying the globalisation which is being built up at supra-national level. It is a framework for negotiation in which the governments of the member States come together to try to overcome disagreements between them concerning trade. At the heart of the system are the WTO Agreements, negotiated and signed by the States. These documents comprise the basic legal rules governing international trade. They are essentially contracts, according to the terms of which the governments must carry out their trade policy within the agreed limits.

The United Nations Organisation is also seeking new inspiration in the face of this accelerating globalisation, and today finds itself in the midst of a process of internal reform the main aim of which is to put forward innovative responses to make this globalisation more equitable and sustainable in the long term.

With the exception of the unique case of the European Union, which has managed to gradually put in place forms of governance that include not only the States but also certain sub-national authorities as well as civil society, the supra-national responses that exist so far remain in the control of sovereign States which make decisions on their own without really taking account of sub-national tiers. Paradoxically, however, globalisation has also made it increasingly necessary to take action at the level of citizens and in conjunction with them. This is because the solutions proposed at scales that are too distant, or solutions that are too general, are no longer appropriate and fail to provide a satisfactory response; because the territory – with its strengths, potentials and difficulties – has become part of the solution to the problems; because the problems related to an uncontrolled globalisation (climate change, migrations, food, economic development, locating and relocating of activities and territorial specialisations, etc.) affect first and foremost citizens in their territory, forcing the territory and its decision-making bodies to act.

Most of the responses to globalisation today, i.e. those that aim to establish the conditions for a globalisation that is not simply the law of the strongest but that fosters a sustainable and harmonious development equitably distributed amongst the greatest possible number of people, are therefore to be found where actions at global and local level meet, in the interaction between the territories and those who govern them and the international bodies trying to provide global responses.

This governance, to be invented from local to global level, does not of course claim to cut out the national level, which remains central. It aims however to integrate the different levels of public responsibility and get them to work together in the framework of mechanisms in which each partner has a role to play, as long as it is accepted that everyone has a role to play.

## **II. The FOGAR: a joint response from the Regions of the world**

The local and regional authorities in Europe have, for a long time, been grouping together, firstly at national then at European level, in order to take joint action, and to increase their influence in the debates and decision-making and their participation in the delivery of policies on the ground. Such actions – encouraged and supported by the European bodies – have led to the establishment of real partnerships between the different tiers of public authorities from the European institutions down to regional and local authorities, all in the service of territorial development. Similar movements have emerged, during the last decade, in the other continents, in Asia, Africa and America.

Today, in the face of the new global situation, the Regions – the first level of sub-national government – have decided to group together at global level. In the same way that they have gradually learned how to have an impact at national and European level, they must now have a joint impact at the global level at which issues that concern them are decided and policies that concern them are delivered.

A first sector-based initiative was taken at the Johannesburg Summit (2002) on climate change. On this occasion, Regions and networks of Regions set up nrg4SD (Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development). While the Basque Country together with Western Cape Province co-chaired the network, the CPMR was in charge of its financial management on a voluntary basis.

The reflection was taken forward at the instigation of the CPMR and in partnership with the EU, UNDP, the OECD and the WTO, during a meeting held in the Azores in June 2006 entitled “Regions and Globalisation”. One of the conclusions of this first meeting was the urgent necessity for the Regions and the networks representing them to come together in a more formal structure, and to work more closely together in order to make their voices heard.

This formal structure was given concrete shape in Marseille in March 2007 at the “*First International Convention for a local and regional approach to development*”, organised by the CPMR, UNDP and the Regional Council of Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur. The idea was for representatives of local and regional authorities, States, the European Union, various United Nations agencies (with a view to contributing to the implementation of the MDG) to work together to put forward new, innovative, and collaborative solutions involving all levels of governance; solutions aimed at improving support for development policies conducted in particular by the sub-national authorities and which would provide, more than just financial support, a new complementary vision taking full account of the territories in an integrated way.

On this occasion, the Marseille Declaration on “the Participation of the Regions in the governance of globalisation” was signed on 7 March 2007 by 11 pioneering international networks of Regions. These were joined by other African and Asian networks early in 2008.

Together the signatory networks created the Forum of Global Associations of Regions (FOGAR) to implement the priorities defined in the Declaration:

- make the voice of the Regions heard in global bodies;
- organise new rules for strategic governance including the sub-state tiers;
- encourage cooperation between member Regions.

The activities and reflections that take place in the framework of FOGAR are aimed first of all at enabling the Regions, via their networks, to compare their practices, places and roles within the different national systems and to exchange and learn from one another. In this way they can help to reinforce the regional dimension at global level, increasing its influence and integrating it into the national and international mechanisms of governance.

The place and the role of the Regions, their powers and prerogatives are very different from one country to another. The degree to which they are organised varies considerably, as does their actual capacity to influence the development of their territory. It is important to organise exchanges so as to strengthen the place and role of the Regions, especially in those areas in which they are less organised, so that they can contribute to the development of their territories, as closely as possible to the needs of citizens. Such exchanges and comparisons of good practice between Regions and networks of Regions need to be organised.

FOGAR’s second aim is to influence the national and international decision-making bodies and the debates taking place within these bodies, so that they take account of the regional authorities, their needs, their preoccupations, and above all that they make use of and exploit their assets and their potential in order to work together in building new development dynamics and finding joint responses to the challenges of globalisation.

To do this, FOGAR promotes two complementary notions:

- an integrated territory-based approach to implementing solutions on the ground in response to the new challenges facing these territories;
- the promotion of new rules of governance at global level, including the regional tier, and enabling this integrated territorial approach to be developed.

General approaches proposing one-size-fits-all solutions are inadequate; they must be accompanied by a vision that originates from the territory’s point of view. This must be the starting-point in working towards an innovative, harmonious, and sustainable development. This is a long-term objective which, to become reality, requires the Regions to demonstrate their capacity to organise the development of their territory.

In an increasingly complex world, in which it is becoming difficult to clearly delimit approaches, purely sectoral responses are no longer sufficient. Political solutions to society’s problems must more often than not be found where different sectoral approaches meet, and as close as possible to the situation on the ground. The overlapping of the economic, environmental, and social spheres has become a tangible reality for all citizens. The territorial approach enables decision-making – in whichever area concerned – to converge on a tangible basis bringing together all the actors involved and all the dimensions of political action. It is a matter of bringing innovative and effective solutions to bear, which ensure that the territories are integrated into the new global set-up, all the while making the most of the potential and assets of these territories.

This integrated territory-based approach implies taking account of those who have the best knowledge of these territories, those who work on a day-to-day basis in their service, i.e. the regional authorities. These must participate in the gradual establishment of new forms of governance that will enable the different tiers of public institutions to work together. Acting alone is no longer possible; whether we are talking about the sub-national, national or international level, the answer is to be found in the interaction between these levels.

FOGAR intends to become a recognised interlocutor at international level and make the voice of the Regions heard in those forums where they must be heard and taken into account, all the while demonstrating the justification for regional action and its importance in a global framework in which each public institution, each tier of government, has a specific and collaborative role to play.

The network has already had the opportunity to promote its objectives and its dual approach – territory-based and governance-based – vis-à-vis a number of partners: the European Commission, United Nations agencies, secretariat of the World Trade Organization; in particular concerning the question of support for development aid which needs to be made more efficient with the support of sub-national bodies. FOGAR hopes to widen the framework of its reflections and proposals in 2009.

The members of FOGAR call for the regional authorities to be genuinely taken into account in the establishment of a global governance that needs to be set up gradually. They are aware that this initiative must be a global one and must integrate all the actors concerned, from the international institutions down to local authorities, as well as representatives of civil society. This is why FOGAR works together with United Cities and Local Governments, to make the voices of local and regional governments heard.

### **III. FOGAR's work programme for 2009-2010**

#### *Promoting the territorial approach and multi-level governance*

FOGAR will pursue its actions to promote and explain the territorial approach and its counterpart: the establishment of a new multi-level global governance to be defined with the whole spectrum of institutional partners. The network will in particular act by means of its participation in the European platform of local and regional authorities for development. This recently-created platform aims to become the main interlocutor of the EU bodies, in particular the Directorate General for Development, on the theme of development aid and the role of sub-national authorities in this framework.

The network also intends to be a partner of the European Commission's Directorate General for Regional Policy in taking forward its reflections on the conditions for the success of cohesion policy within the Union, the role of regional authorities in this framework, and looking at how, in which form and under which conditions, this know-how can be transferred and used in other continental, sub-continental or national areas, to contribute to a more harmonious and balanced development. FOGAR will especially take into account the case of the border regions, whose specific characteristics and vital role in building up economic and social areas and areas of peace and cooperation are all too often ignored or underestimated by the national States.

In the same spirit, FOGAR proposes to support the strengthening of associations of Regions which are being set up in other continents so that they can become the interlocutors of supra-national economic groupings, partners of their growth strategies and promoters of regional public tiers of government able to play a useful part in mechanisms for multi-level governance.

Of course, FOGAR will also continue to lobby the EU institutions, the United Nations, and the Bretton Woods institutions to see the importance of the regional dimension is recognised.

#### *Climate change*

Global warming and climate change are now a certainty, and all human communities are concerned. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol have laid the foundations for international action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. However, in spite of the intense mobilisation, the efforts being made are only a partial response to the threats our planet faces. There is also the question of adapting our societies to the already visible and inevitable consequences of global warming. Aware of the challenges and the need to mobilise all levels of public decision-making, FOGAR is endeavouring to actively demonstrate the pertinence of action taken at the regional level in response to these fundamental challenges, and the need to foster exchanges and experiences between Regions in different parts of the world. The nrg4SD network, in charge of this theme within FOGAR, will continue its work, especially in the framework of the official partnership established between the United Nations and the Regions on this issue of climate change. FOGAR will support the efforts made in working towards greater

recognition of the regional dimension in the conclusions that will come out of the Copenhagen conference which aims to reach an agreement to follow the Kyoto Protocol.

#### *Food and the Regions*

The issues related to agriculture, food and food security need to be addressed as a priority at global level in order to tackle increasingly imbalanced situations, sources of crises and worsening difficulties for a growing number of citizens as well as international tensions. Representatives of regional and local authorities, States, the European Union, the relevant United Nations agencies and the WTO need to reflect on and propose programmes and innovative concrete actions to tackle these food crises, using the assets and potential of the territories (boosting production of food crops, introduction of local food systems etc.). To this end, FOGAR, basing its position in particular on the work carried out by the CPMR, will support the development of cooperation between the Regions and the FAO, as well as the Senegalese initiative to host a meeting of the world's Regions on this theme in 2009.

#### *Alliance of Civilisations*

The Alliance of Civilisations, created under the aegis of the United Nations in 2005, aims to improve understanding and cooperative relations among nations and peoples across cultures and religions and in the process to help counter the forces that fuel polarisation and extremism. FOGAR, in collaboration with UCLG, intends to take an active part in implementing this idea of bringing peoples and civilisations closer together. In particular, it will take special account of the unique nature of indigenous cultures.

#### *Making a date for an initial assessment and new prospects*

At the initiative of OLAGI and ZICOSUR, FOGAR's members have scheduled to meet in 2010 in Latin America, to:

- make an assessment of the previous two years of action
- adopt the perspectives for 2010-2010
- ensure that the legal and financial structure is adapted to this new stage.

#### **IV. List of the networks that are members of FOGAR**



AIRF: Association Internationale des Régions Francophones (*International Association of French-speaking Regions*)



AEBR: Association of European Border Regions



CPMR: Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions



CPMR Inter-Mediterranean Commission



CRECENEA: Comisión Regional de Comercio Exterior del NorEste Argentino



IT4ALL: Network of local authorities for the information society



Norte Grande Argentino



Northern Forum: International Association of Regional Governments from the Arctic Region



Nrg4SD: Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development



OLAGI: Latin-American Organisation of Intermediate Governments



ZICOSUR: Integration Zone of West Central South America



Conference of Leaders of the EU's Outermost Regions

Association of Regions of Burkina Faso

Association of Provinces of Gabon

Association for Provincial Government of Indonesia

Association of Regions of the Kingdom of Morocco

Association of Regions of Senegal