



Setting The Direction For The Future

25th Anniversary Statement of the
Four Motors for Europe



I. Introduction: Assessment for the Four Motors

The Four Motors for Europe understand their cooperation as a contribution to the development of the European Union (EU). They aim to act as a modern catalyst, a nucleus to develop operations and thus to advance the development of the entire EU. This way the EU and its member states will be equipped for the challenges of a globalised world. Through the intermediary role of the Four Motors for Europe between the EU and the citizens they serve, they aim to encourage identification with the EU and give it a more concrete face.

The Four Motors for Europe, started as an association of economically strong regions, is a pioneering model for regionalisation development in Europe. The economic strength and leadership status of the Four Motors in so many areas have opened doors for unification at a European level and continue to provide an impetus for further success. Thus, the Four Motors meet their responsibilities, and the role of the regions within European structures is strengthened. This is especially true given the current economic and social circumstances in Europe, which have left many regions in a difficult situation. The regions have a special role to play: this project provides regions the opportunity to build confidence, to act and to live within European integration. Regions are able to diffuse conflicts at a sub-national level and to forge cooperation despite differences at the level of Member States – they build bridges.

The Four Motors for Europe are convinced that the subsidiarity principle of tri-

partism of European Union–Member State–region is important and the correct direction for the future of Europe. The Four Motors are, therefore, committed to a Europe with a subsidiary structure; from bottom to top the European Union is rooted in communities and regions. On one hand the Four Motors support a clear division of responsibilities between the EU, the Member States and the regions, and on the other, a strong role for local and regional levels in the EU.

It's imperative for the EU, as a strong partner, to achieve its goals and realise its vision for the regions; and to this end, many EU–level crisis management decisions must be met at the regional level. Therefore, the following arrangements must be implemented. The Four Motors for Europe are an important link to European policy and recognise the need for policy measures to promote understanding. At the same time, they want to ensure that the worries and concerns of citizens are listened to and addressed by the European Union. The Four Motors are convinced that Europe will survive the current crisis. However, the crisis that stems from the unleashed power of financial markets is not only a financial and economic issue, but also carries political and cultural dimensions. Regions are part of an evolving international context and have a primary role to play in meeting the challenges within their territories. The Four Motors want to ensure that Europe is growing together in the areas of fiscal, economic and social policy. The Four Motors understand the European Union as a solid union, and they are engaged in helping to build the "House of Europe" and maintain it for the future by tackling common challenges together,

strengthening cohesion and cooperation among the regions, and primarily, giving the EU a renewed vigor.

25 years ago: The beginning of the Four Motors for Europe

The Four Motors for Europe were founded in 1988. Its members were characterized then, as now, not only by their prominent position within their respective countries, but also in Europe. Together they comprise about 6.8% of the population of the European Union and provide 8.2% of EU GDP today.

The initial concern of the Four Motors for Europe was not only to strengthen the voice of Europe's regions. From the beginning, their agenda included further-reaching goals and the Four Motors for Europe are proud to have successfully implemented this agenda. Just as much has been accomplished in the goal of infrastructure development between the regions as in their goal to intensify research and academic cooperation. The fact that each of the four regions occupies a leading position in their respective countries in the field of innovation is visible proof of their success.

In the economic sphere, the Four Motors for Europe have been brought together through a variety of events with companies and consumers from different regions, both inside and outside the EU area, working to promote trade and business. The Four Motors for Europe have strived to strengthen their international projection and have carried out several successful economic and institutional missions in economically strategic areas such as China, Brazil, the

Russian Federation, Morocco and the

Danube region. The work of the Four Motors for Europe is recognised in Europe and the world to such an extent that similar networks are being modeled after it in partner countries, such as the "Four Motors for MERCOSUR" in Latin America.

The Four Motors for Europe are among the most productive and innovative regions in Europe. In order to maintain and expand their high economic and technological performance during the current crisis, they continue to invest in education, research and development for central targets. The focus on export, especially in small and medium enterprises, is the backbone of the economy. The undertakings in their territories have a clear emphasis on research-intensive innovation and are based on export-oriented suppliers and customers. More than ever, their international competitiveness depends on innovation, knowledge, quality and technological expertise. Increasing global competition will require further sustained efforts by the Four Motors.

In the area of corporate, social and health policies, an intensive exchange of best practice models has taken place in the Four Motors for Europe, under the auspices of both economic and labor dialogues, as well as social and health conferences. These have dealt with issues of economic and social change in the regions against the background of changing economic and social conditions.

The Four Motors for Europe are proud of what they have achieved in the 25 years since their foundation. Their cooperation started in 1988, well before the official recognition of the Committee of the Regions in the EU treaties; the pattern of cooperation the four partner regions initiated can be considered a pioneering experience of European interregional cooperation aiming to advance the political role of regions in Europe.

The Four Motors for Europe view their successful past as an impetus to address the direction in which the network is to develop in the future and how they can participate in the shaping of Europe's future architecture.

II. Setting the course for the future

The expected changes in the European Union and the world confront the Four Motors for Europe with considerable challenges. The Four Motors must face these challenges together; otherwise, the comprehensive tasks for the coming years cannot be resolved. This is especially pertinent given the involvement of the regions in the processes of reorganisation and their role in an expanding Europe. Because decisions taken and legislative requirements created at the European level affect all territories in its core, an extension of the regions' range of expertise is essential. Development should be based upon a stronger role for regions and equal cooperation between member states and regions, as can be seen, for example, in the framework of macroregional strategies (like the EU Strategy for the

Democratic legitimacy and citizen participation

Danube Region, and the current cooperation path towards an EU Strategy for the Alps and the EU Strategy for the Mediterranean). In this context, the Four Motors for Europe emphasise the role of regions in the EU regional policies and campaign for greater participation of regions in the design and implementation of EU programmes and resources.

The Four Motors are convinced that a sustainable Europe still needs to be configured democratically. The clearly emergent intensification of economic and monetary union will change the European Union and its sustainable

architecture. Intensified integration of different policy fields necessarily increases the need for democratic legitimacy of the European

Union. The Four Motors for Europe maintain that this can only be ensured by strengthening civil society and the expansion of citizen participation. Besides the representation of the regional level through the Committee of the Regions, the Four Motors must fulfil their role as pioneers and actively support the EU with their own expertise and initiatives. Through increased participation of civil society in policy exchanges and actions within their own remit, it is the aim of the Four Motors to actively engage citizens in the task of bringing Europe together. An intensive networking of civil society actors sharing best practice models through exchange platforms and within the framework of the Four Motors can serve as a catalyst to take up and advance innovative ideas and projects from all areas of the partnership agenda.

Moreover, the Four Motors are convinced that a more intense and qualitatively deeper involvement of parliamentary cooperation in the framework of the Four Motors serves better to represent the common interests of internal and external parties. Full democratic legitimacy will only be achieved through a broad culture of debate and decision-making at all levels of the European multilevel system.

In Brussels the cooperation of the Four Motors is perceived as "Europe lives."

The offices of the Four Motors in Brussels exchange information about their activities and positions, as well as their experience in the implementation of EU policies, thereby combining their strengths – all of this in the context of integrated regional programs. Institutional meetings with the European Commission, MEPs, and the Committee of the Regions, such as the meeting of the Presidents of the Four Motors with Presidents of European Parliamentarian Committees, European Commissioners and MEPs of their respective regional areas which took place in March 2012 in Brussels have helped to enhance the exchange and networking with EU institutions, ultimately increasing the visibility of the Four Motors in Brussels and providing a real paradigm for multilevel governance.

In following selected thematic areas, the Four Motors have built an intensive and qualified cooperation model which they seek to further improve and develop in order to effectively respond to the EU's current and future challenges:

Climate and environmental protection

For the Four Motors for Europe, climate and environmental protection is of particular importance. The next few years will be especially influenced by climate and energy objectives of the EU in keeping with the 2020 strategy. The goals can only be achieved through a change in the economic policies of the Member States as they move to a low-carbon economy. As technologically advanced regions of Europe, the Four Motors must make a contribution here,

including in the development of renewable energy or the intensification of recycling economies. The planned European network expansion in the areas of transport and energy will be shaped and strengthened through their own initiatives.

Taking into account climate change objectives of both governments and the EU, the focus here is particularly on railways as a low-emission means of transportation. The regions have great potential for electric vehicles and receive targeted support through projects for collaboration and expansion. The expansion of roads has to not only connect the major centres with each other, but also increase mobility and connectivity in rural areas. In addition, the evidence of climate change impacts on economic sectors and ecosystems is overwhelming. Regions must be sensitive to this new reality and develop adaptation strategies in order to identify those impacts and put in place actions to reduce their magnitude. The use of structural funds in flagship projects and best practice competitions gives the Four Motors for Europe an opportunity to bring their expertise into the pan-European exchange of experiences for the benefit of all.

Economy, research and innovation

The economic, environmental and social challenges in Europe require closer economic and technological cooperation across the regions of Europe to address them adequately. Developing transnational economic and technological cooperation between the regions is also an important contribution to improving the global competitiveness of the European economy

and industry, as well as small and medium enterprises, and to creating employment opportunities for young people. The Four Motors continue to act as an important and sustainable model for transnational cooperation in Europe and consider innovation a priority objective of their joint projects in line with the Europe 2020 strategy.

Innovation is a crucial starting point to further develop the growth areas of the future, such as sustainable and electric vehicles, renewable energies, energy efficiency, healthcare, information technology, telecommunications and intelligent products leading to new market and employment opportunities. As technologically advanced regions, the Four Motors must contribute to strengthening Europe in the field of key technologies, be it in future production technology and industrial 4.0, information and telecommunications technology, resource-efficient new materials, medical technology, the development and controlled application of nanotechnology, the development of renewable energy, or the intensification of a recycling economy.

Other research areas will be undertaken in the Four Motors more specifically. The cluster formation and transnational cluster cooperation will be important contributions to strengthening the capacity for innovation in Europe. Overall, there has to be a prominent objective for the Four Motors to support innovation and fortify efforts in education, civil society, academia and industry. The networking of universities and research institutions with business and civil

society actors at regional, national and

European levels is encouraged in order to further advance this purpose. Universities and companies, especially small and medium enterprises, need to participate more effectively in the EU's educational and research programs. This includes the promotion of cross-border cooperation in the education and science sectors and the exchange of students and staff within the EU.

Finally, in a context of increasing integration with the EU, growing domestic trade, and the emergence of a European market, the Four Motors would drive the expansion of an effective and sustainable transport infrastructure. They would contribute to securing mobility as a crucial issue for the economy of their regions.

Social, labor and health policy

Financial and economic crisis, increasing poverty, social exclusion around Europe, demographic change, social change and the mobility of people within Europe and worldwide will all have an impact on the social reality in our regions. These factors affect a number of areas: family structures, integration policy, issues affecting the elderly, social security, health and social care, investment in children's welfare, tackling poverty and social exclusion as well as "good and safe work", especially for young people. The demographic revolution affecting

every region to varying degrees presents Europe with previously unknown obstacles; the change in the labor market with potential skill shortages and high youth unemployment represent challenges that Europe can only solve together with its regions. We can add to this labor migration issues, new working models and many other issues of social and health policy. A successful integration policy requires widespread participation and equal opportunity for all. For these issues, a contribution to developing and exchanging ideas about new models between the Four Motors will remain important in the future.

In the education sector, the Four Motors will continue their successful collaboration and expand their efforts. Education in a globalised world is a key issue for the European Union and its members. The "Europe 2020" strategy, states that the EU should develop the strongest economy in the world. In order to achieve this and to combat high unemployment in

Europe, it is necessary to make education a higher priority. Under the heading of inclusive education, not only should poverty be eliminated, but a strong selection effect for disadvantaged groups should also be introduced. The Four Motors seek to intensify their cooperation to improve the quality of education in their regions. This is to be done in accordance with the decisions of the Bruges Communiqué of 2010, which, among other things, promote greater efficiency in vocational education and enhance its appeal, including life-long learning and mobility as core goals.

Education and training

The Four Motors look at vocational education as a fundamental basis for existence. The acquisition of practical skills is an important part of personal development, improving employability, and thus, lowering the current massive youth unemployment in the EU. The Four Motors want to expand their knowledge of the vocational training system further by also conducting joint projects and sharing positive experiences they have gained through bilateral cooperation within their network and through cooperation with other countries.

Youth, sports and culture: Living together

European cultures thrive on knowing more about one another. The Four Motors will make an active contribution to cultivating citizens of Europe. The cultural and sports exchange is particularly important for young people. Through joint sports activities, events and projects, young people learn to understand the diversity of each other's cultures better. By bringing people closer together, the Four Motors contribute to the project of a Europe of citizens.

Through exchanges among young people – in the framework of EU youth mobility projects or through youth camps such as the ones undertaken since 2002 in the regions of the Four Motors – networks are created. This not only deepens cultural understanding and a sense of community, but also acts as a multiplier for the ideas and ideals of the Four Motors. The Four Motors want to expand exchanges in this framework backed up by other joint projects in the

field of culture and sports. The Four Motors want to strengthen their efforts in the area of culture and creative industries and tackle projects together with appropriate stakeholders at all levels of politics, economics, creative industries, science, culture and civil society.

III. Outlook

The Four Motors for Europe express their willingness and commitment to further enhance their cooperation (among institutional and other relevant actors of their respective territories) in order to strengthen and improve the role of leading regions both in Europe and in relations with key global macroregional areas. They will strive to actively participate in European processes and will work jointly to pursue direct dialogue with the European institutions. The regions of the Four Motors will continue to affirm the importance of the contribution regions can offer to both European policy design as well as European policy and programme implementation. They will carry out joint consultations and joint projects in order to attain a real and substantial multilevel governance. The Four Motors for Europe will look at European and international interregional networks as potentially enriching cooperation platforms; they will be open to fostering exchanges with those interregional alliances which can facilitate the exchange of knowledge, competencies and opportunities to effectively tackle global challenges affecting citizens' current and future lives.

The Four Motors have the right and the duty as advanced regions to actively participate in the European process and to serve as an example of the common

goals of a citizens' Europe through greater involvement of civil society and enhanced parliamentarisation.