

## Committee of the Regions press release regarding seating arrangements at plenary sessions (29 September 2004)

**Caption:** On 29 September 2004, members of the Committee of the Regions vote by a decisive margin to change the seating arrangements at their plenary sessions in order to reflect their political affiliations.

**Source:** Committee of the Regions - Press Releases. [ON-LINE]. [Brussels]: Committee of the Regions, [01.04.2005]. Available on [http://www.cor.eu.int/en/press/press\\_04\\_09073.html](http://www.cor.eu.int/en/press/press_04_09073.html).

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[http://www.cvce.eu/obj/committee\\_of\\_the\\_regions\\_press\\_release\\_regarding\\_seating\\_arrangements\\_at\\_plenary\\_sessions\\_29\\_september\\_2004-en-ffd3e923-afe4-4d34-b0ec-54783db6d400.html](http://www.cvce.eu/obj/committee_of_the_regions_press_release_regarding_seating_arrangements_at_plenary_sessions_29_september_2004-en-ffd3e923-afe4-4d34-b0ec-54783db6d400.html)

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## CoR members vote to sit as political assembly

Members of the Committee of the Regions have voted by a decisive margin to change the seating arrangements at their plenary sessions in order to reflect their political colours.

Throughout the CoR's 10-year existence until now, its members, who represent local and regional authorities across the EU, have sat in alphabetical order.

Members voted by 111-65 in favour of the change, following a lively exchange of views on the issue at their plenary session today (29/09/04).

Those in favour of the new seating arrangements, led by First Vice-President Sir Albert Bore (PES-UK), argued that giving the CoR a more political profile would make it a more effective body and enable it to be taken more seriously by the European Parliament.

Mr Bore said the move would result in the CoR having more "solidity" in the wake of EU enlargement.

Reinhard Stuth (EPP-DE) agreed, saying the CoR risked allowing itself to be portrayed as an "academy of scientists" if it failed to grasp the nettle. "I am not a political eunuch!" he declared. Pedro Sanz Alonso (EPP-ES) supported that view, saying he was both a representative of his region and his party. "When we defend political projects, we defend our regions," he added.

Gordon Keymer (EPP-UK) said that a political impetus would help the CoR's Committee for Administrative and Financial Affairs when it lobbies MEPs over restrictions in the CoR's budget. "We must not live in a fairytale land," he added.

But there were strong arguments for retaining the existing seating system. Wim Van Gelder (EPP-NL) suggested the CoR could end up being seen as a "pale imitation of the European Parliament".

Knud Anderson (ELDR-DK) echoed his concerns, arguing that the Committee's members were appointed to represent local and regional authorities in all their diversity and not to adopt EU policy. José Maria Muñoa Ganuza (ELDR-ES) stressed that the CoR was a "territorial chamber", whilst Karol Karski (UEN-EA-PL) pointed out that under the EU Treaties, members were prohibited from taking instructions of any sort. Seamus Murray (UEN-EA-IE) highlighted that the change could result in practical difficulties as some members' alternates represented different parties.

Dennis Abbott