The role of the regional and local powers in the European construction

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The committee adopted the own-initiative report by its chairman, Giorgio NAPOLITANO (PES, I), on the role of regional and local authorities in European integration. The report contained general recommendations as well as proposals for amendments to certain articles of the treaties. MEPs believed that the hierarchical pyramid structure of the EU's institutional system should be abandoned and that local and regional authorities should be more involved in the European decision-making process. They called on the Commission, when drafting legislation and devising Community policies, to involve in the process, "on a full and regular basis", those who are required to implement these laws and policies, with the precise arrangements for participation by regional and local authorities being determined by national structures. The report also expressed the hope that consultation of regional or local interests would "principally take place via the Committee of the Regions or via the most representative European associations for the defence of regional, urban and local interests". It added that the right to take an issue to the Court of Justice where the subsidiarity principle is presumed to have been breached should be shared between the Committee of the Regions and regional and local authorities which have legislative powers. The committee also sought to add to the treaty an article on linguistic diversity, saying that the Community should, within its spheres of competence, respect and promote linguistic diversity in Europe "including regional or minority languages as an expression of that diversity". MEPs also believed it was important to foster transfrontier cooperation at all levels as this was "a European task and a political objective of the EU". Lastly, the European Convention was asked to examine the role of regional and local authorities in European integration.