

36th SESSION

Report
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The budget and resources of the Congress for the next biennium (2020-2021)

Bureau of the Congress

Co-rapporteurs: ¹ Anna MAGYAR, Hungary (R, EPPCCE) and Barbara TOCE, Italy (L, SOC)

Recommendation 430 (2019) 2

Summary

The Congress has repeatedly requested that its share of the Council of Europe budget be increased to 3 % in order to ensure a budgetary envelope which would enable the Congress to fully deliver with regard to the Council of Europe's priorities while its share has dropped since 2010 from 2,92% to 2,54%.

The possible additional cuts that will need to be made in the budget and resources of the Congress for the next biennium 2020-2021 in order to cope with the non-payment by the Russian Federation of its obligatory contributions to the Ordinary Budget of the Council of Europe ("contingency plan") will oblige the Congress to continue to reduce its activities despite the efforts made to increase its efficiency in recent years. These new budget cuts would incur additional risks for its statutory activities and for its thematic and co-operation activities.

This recommendation draws attention to the continued need to include in the draft programme and budget for the next biennium (2020-2021) a budget envelope for the Congress which will fully recognise its contribution to the Council of Europe priorities by gradually returning to a share of 3 % of the Ordinary Budget without which the Congress can simply not deliver what is expected of it.

¹ L: Chamber of Local Authorities / R: Chamber of Regions
EPP/CCE: European People's Party Group in the Congress
SOC: Socialist Group
ILDG: Independent and Liberal Democrat Group
ECR: European Conservatives and Reformists Group
NR: Members not belonging to a political group of the Congress

RECOMMENDATION 430 (2019)²

The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe,

1. reaffirming its role and institutional position within the Council of Europe as the voice of local and regional authorities from all 47 member States and the guardian of the European Charter of Local Self-Government (ECLSG), and its responsibility for promoting and fostering the implementation of Council of Europe common standards for local self-government and regional democracy in Europe;
2. highlighting the fact that, with the ratification of the ECLSG by all 47 member States in 2014, the Congress' monitoring activities, which provide that every member State shall be monitored approximately every five years, have substantially increased;
3. referring to the regular exchanges of views between the Congress President and Secretary General with the Committee of Ministers;
4. stressing the appreciation expressed on these occasions for the results achieved by the Congress as well as the acknowledgement and understanding of the risks that further budget cuts would incur not only for its statutory activities but also for its post-monitoring, thematic and co-operation activities, which are tailored to member States' demands and interests;
5. underlining the fact that it has been obliged to cut its activities including those allowing it to address the challenges identified in Secretary General Thorbjørn Jagland's annual reports on the situation of democracy, human rights and the rule of law;
6. highlighting its intention to review, in the advent of more favourable financial conditions, those cost-saving measures which have had an impact on its statutory activities, such as those related to interpretation;
7. drawing attention, in particular to:
 - a. its continued contribution – in a proportion that is higher than its share of the Ordinary Budget of the Council of Europe – to the Organisation's efficiency savings and cuts in its operational budget as well as in its human resources since 2010;
 - b. the cuts in the budget of the Congress in 2018 of 911 800€ (452 800 € for staff and 459 000€ for activities) that is 13.2 % of the initial 6 925 100€;
 - c. the additional cuts in the budget of the Congress examined by the Committee of Ministers for 2020-2021 in response to the non-payment by the Russian Federation of its obligatory contributions to the Ordinary Budget of the Council of Europe ("contingency plan");
 - d. the repeated requests of the Congress, never taken into account by the Committee of Ministers, for its share of the Council of Europe's budget to be increased to 3% in order to ensure a budgetary envelope which would enable the Congress to fully deliver with regard to the Council of Europe's priorities while this share has dropped since 2010 from 2.92% to 2.54%;
8. asks the Committee of Ministers to:
 - a. acknowledge the results achieved and the efforts made, in increasing the efficiency of the Congress in recent years despite a reduced budgetary allocation and significant restrictions in the human resources made available to it;
 - b. ensure, through its regular political dialogue with the Congress, consistency between the priorities identified by the Congress and its budgetary allocations in order to achieve critical mass and a real impact;

² Debated and adopted by the Congress on 2 April 2019, 1st sitting (see Document [CG36\(2019\)09](#)), Co-rapporteurs: Anna MAGYAR, Hungary (R, EPP/CCE) and Barbara TOCE, Italy (L, SOC).

c. in light of the role and institutional position of the Congress within the Council of Europe, and taking due account of its continuous efforts (including its reforms of 2010, 2015 and 2018 and the introduction of a new language regime in 2019), decide to allocate an operational budget and human resources to the Congress for the next biennium 2020-2021 commensurate with and in acknowledgement of the requirements of its institutional functioning as well as of its statutory, institutional, monitoring, thematic and advisory tasks;

d. consider the Congress as a monitoring body, in view of the importance of local and regional authorities in contributing to the implementation of the values of the Council of Europe, and to reverse the downward trend, gradually returning to a share of 3% of the Ordinary Budget without which the Congress can simply not deliver what is expected of it;

e. consider how best to focus and concentrate all activities of the Council of Europe targeting local and regional authorities and their political representatives taking into account the political and operational capacities of the Congress and its secretariat;

f. invite the Secretary General of the Council of Europe to include in the draft programme and budget for the next biennium (2020-2021) a budget envelope for the Congress which will fully recognise its contribution to the Council of Europe priorities as a monitoring body and the pan-European promoter of territorial democracy, that encourages devolution and debates and exchanges of good practices among local and regional elected peers on our societies' major topical issues.

APPENDIX

2018-2019 budgets

1. The 2018 Congress budget was implemented up to 97.33%, showing that the financial resources allocated to the Congress are necessary and fully used. The scope for covering additional unforeseen activities or responding to political emergencies is very limited.

Budget outlook for 2020-2021 and beyond

2. The annual budget allocated to the Congress by the Committee of Ministers for 2018 was € 6,201,500 of which € 3,815,700 was for staff costs and € 2,385,800 for operational costs. The Congress budget, as a percentage of the total ordinary budget of the Council of Europe, decreased from 2.92% in 2010 to 2.54% in 2018 (see table below).

Evolution of human resources within the Congress Secretariat

YEAR	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
POSTS	42	41	39	37	37	37	37	37	37 ⁽¹⁾
POSITIONS	5	5	5	5	5	4	2	2	1
TOTAL	47	46	44	42	42	41	39	39	38

(1) of which 2 posts frozen.

Compared Evolution of the Congress and the Council of Europe Budget

YEAR	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018 ⁽¹⁾	2019
CoE BUDGET	240 016 900	243 970 300	244 095 200	245 067 600	259 915 400	260 090 500	244 477 300	245 336 400
CONGRESS BUDGET	6 996 900	6 726 100	6 696 500	6 891 400	7 126 400	7 113 300	6 201 500	6 201 900
%	2,92	2,76	2,74	2,81	2,74	2,73	2,54	2,53

(1) Adjusted budget as a result of the cessation of Turkey's major contributor status.