

THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

Recommendation 434 (2019)¹ Financial compensation of local and regional elected representatives in the exercise of their office

1. To ensure the effectiveness of local and regional governance and to minimise the risk of corruption, it is vital that local and regional representatives receive appropriate and adequate compensation for their work. Article 7 of the European Charter of Local Self-Government (ETS No. 122, “the Charter”) sets an important European standard in this respect and deserves to be applied more thoroughly.

2. Financial compensation for local and regional elected representatives needs to be sufficient for them to be able to carry out their duties properly. This could take the form of salary scales for heads of local and regional authorities and those with executive functions, setting out, at the national or regional level, as appropriate, minimum and maximum thresholds of remuneration.

3. It may be appropriate to apply equalisation measures with regard to financial compensation, so that local and regional representatives carrying out comparable duties are compensated in line with the national framework and not with reference to the relative wealth of the region in which they hold office.

4. Financial compensation needs to be tailored to the needs and individual circumstances of local and regional representatives. Representatives with a higher workload should receive greater compensation as a matter of course, but also with a view to reducing the risk of corruption. It is acceptable to link financial compensation to the actual time spent on the duties related to an elected office, including travel and attendance at meetings.

5. As social welfare protection for local and regional representatives in member States tends to reflect the development of social welfare protection in general in each country, special consideration needs to be given to the circumstances of local and regional representatives if they are not adequately covered by the general social welfare protection scheme. For example, single parents or people with disabilities should be offered adequate compensation in all member States to enable them to fulfil the duties of elected office.

6. Corruption in all its forms is a destructive threat to the efficiency and quality of good governance at both local and regional level. For this reason, not only should the financial compensation of local and regional representatives be appropriate and adequate, it should also be publicly transparent. Applying such transparency at the local and regional level will contribute to instilling trust in local and regional governments. The means, levels and sources of financial compensation for local and regional representatives should be made clear and accessible.

7. Reliance on systems of local and regional elected representation which are voluntary and non-remunerated can result in the domination of elected positions by certain socioeconomic groups of the population. Only in the smallest councils, where duties are light, should it be considered acceptable for elected representatives to be voluntary or non-remunerated.

8. Since all member States of the Council of Europe now have some form of financial compensation in place for local and regional elected representatives, it is to be regretted that 13 member States have yet to ratify Article 7.2 of the Charter, especially as recent monitoring missions of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe have established that the national legislation of several of these member States has evolved to a point where it can be considered to be in compliance with this article.

9. It is a cause for concern that over half of the member States that responded to the 2016 survey of the Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe (NALAS) do not provide financial compensation for loss of earnings related to the exercise of elected office, despite the explicit reference to such compensation in Article 7.2.

10. In light of the above considerations, the Congress, bearing in mind:

a. its Recommendation 383 (2015) on the conditions of office of elected representatives;

b. the report of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) “Status of local elected representatives in Europe” (2010),

11. Invites the Committee of Ministers to encourage the governments and parliaments of member States and, where applicable, regions with legislative powers, to:

a. ratify Article 7.2 as soon as possible, if they have not yet done so;

b. consider adopting salary scales, at the national or regional level, as appropriate, setting minimum and maximum remuneration thresholds for the heads of local and regional authorities and those with executive functions;

c. ensure that such salary scales and other forms of compensation for local and regional representatives are transparent and open to public scrutiny;

d. ensure that financial compensation takes into account individual needs, such as dependent relatives;

e. ensure that local and regional representatives are compensated for loss of earnings;

f. phase out the practice of non-remunerated or voluntary representation, where it exists, except in the smallest councils, where elected office can be shown not to significantly hinder other professional activities.

1. Debated and adopted by the Congress on 3 April 2019, 2nd sitting (see Document [CG36\(2019\)10](#), explanatory memorandum), co-rapporteurs: Marta CAMPANARI-TALABER, Hungary (L, EPP/CCE), and Robert GRUMAN, Romania (R, EPP/CCE).