

# THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

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## Resolution 382 (2015)<sup>1</sup> Criteria for standing in local and regional elections

1. The right to stand for election is a key component of local and regional democracy. While there needs to be some regulation to weed out spurious candidates, the health of territorial democracy depends on the greatest possible proportion of the electorate being able to stand for election.

2. Democracy cannot be reduced to a specific and fixed blueprint; it must constantly renew itself, adapting to new circumstances and to the social and political development of the societies that practise it.

3. The Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters (2002) of the European Commission for Democracy through Law of the Council of Europe (Venice Commission) has served as the reference standard for the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe to assess the implementation of existing and new legislation in this field.

4. Today, however, the Congress considers that the maturity of the political systems of Council of Europe member States, and the ever stronger expectations of its citizens, make it necessary to complement the code with one dealing with conditions of eligibility to stand and good practice for organising elections at the local and regional level.

5. As recent fruitful exchanges of the Congress with the Council for Democratic Elections and the Venice

Commission have shown, it is time to strengthen the democratic processes of member States, starting with the definition of new standards for the criteria required to run for political elections at local and regional levels.

6. The Congress, supported by its Group of Independent Experts on the European Charter of Local Self-Government (ETS No. 122), will continue to develop its co-operation with the Venice Commission on constitutional, human rights and justice issues which raise questions on the standards of democracy at local and regional level.

7. The Congress:

*a.* asks its committees to work with the Venice Commission and the Council for Democratic Elections, to complement the Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters with a document of good practice for criteria for standing in local and regional elections, in the same spirit as the measures proposed in the recommendation related to this resolution;<sup>2</sup>

*b.* suggests that this new document also take into account the rules of election campaigns and the good practices inspired by concern for greater transparency in political life, particularly as regards its financing;

*c.* proposes that further follow-up should be given to the issues of conflict of interests and campaign resources at the local and regional levels;

*d.* asks its Monitoring Committee to verify the criteria for standing for local and regional elections in the course of its visits to the member States.

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1. Debated and adopted by the Congress on 26 March 2015, 3rd Sitting (see Document CG/2015(28)7FINAL, explanatory memorandum), co-rapporteurs: Oleksii Honcharenko, Ukraine (R, SOC) and Viacheslav Rogov, Russian Federation (L, ILDG).

2. Congress Recommendation 375 (2015) on criteria for standing in local and regional elections.