

The Bureau of the Congress

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Co-operation activities of the Congress in member States and neighbouring regions

Situation at 16 March 2018

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Introduction

In 2011, the Bureau of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities adopted a new orientation² for the Congress' activities by contributing to the Council of Europe Action Plans, which supports member States and States in neighbouring regions in the implementation of legal and institutional reforms, in line with Council of Europe standards. Co-operation activities aim to provide practical responses to the shortcomings and problems identified by the various monitoring bodies of the Council of Europe, with regards to local democracy, and in particular during monitoring visits on the implementation of the European Charter of Local Self-government (ECTS No.122). The *Guidelines for co-operation activities*, approved by the Bureau of the Congress on 23 March 2015,³ further specified the framework and the principles of such co-operation activities, whose importance was reiterated in the *Priorities of the Congress 2017-2020*.

The co-operation activities complement the statutory activities of the Congress, its Chambers and Committees. They provide a link between the recommendations and resolutions adopted at the plenary sessions and the situation on the ground, and are based on political dialogue and the monitoring of the provisions of the European Charter of Local Self-Government. Due to its expertise and experience in local and regional democracy, the Congress is in a position to provide local and regional authorities, and their associations, with the opportunity and means to acquire new skills and 'know-how', and to strengthen their institutional capacities.

Several types of intervention are undertaken: programmes and activities implemented bilaterally in the framework of the Council of Europe Action Plans for specific member States or within the Council of Europe Policy towards neighbouring regions,⁴ and those implemented multilaterally in the framework of specific partnerships such as the European Union's Eastern Partnership, and the Southern Neighbourhood. Moreover, the activities organised within the Council of Europe Policy towards neighbouring regions have been implemented following the creation by the Congress of the status of Partner for Local Democracy in 2014.⁵

The Congress is an indisputable benchmark in local and regional democracy, whose expertise and experience are widely recognised. The beneficiaries, donors, as well as other bodies of the Council of Europe, have all recognised the added value of the Congress to the "local democracy" dimension in the Council of Europe Action Plans. This recognition has led to a substantial increase in the number of Congress co-operation projects. Since October 2012, the total amount contributed by donors is €5 128 305.⁶

Peer exchanges are the main component of the Congress' intervention, for which members of the Congress have a key role to play. Since 2011, over fifty local and regional elected officials representing twenty-three member States have taken part in co-operation projects implemented by the Congress. Where necessary, their contribution and the work of the Congress Secretariat are complemented by experts of the Group of Independent Experts on the European Charter of Local Self-Government, and experts from the beneficiary countries or other European countries.

As most of the projects currently implemented by the Congress are about to be completed, it is therefore timely to take stock of the results achieved, in order to prepare the future contribution of the Congress to the Council of Europe work in the field.

This document presents the main results that the Congress has attained in partnership with the beneficiaries, and, in this respect, summarises the main developments made by the Congress within each of the thematic fields highlighted in the Guidelines for co-operation activities, i.e. fostering dialogue between central government and local and regional authorities, building the capacities of local and regional elected authorities, making young people aware of the principles of local democracy, and learning by doing through involvement in local initiatives to improve governance. Finally, this document also takes stock of the activities implemented in the context of the Council of Europe Policy towards neighbouring regions.

² Framework document for co-operation activities of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities – Document CG/BUR/2011(21)4): <https://rm.coe.int/168071aeb0>

³ "Improving the impact of Congress recommendations: Guidelines for co-operation activities in Council of Europe member States", CG/BUR/2015(27)31, Bureau of the Congress, 23 March 2015. Available at <https://rm.coe.int/168071a684>

⁴ Report on the implementation of the Council of Europe Policy towards neighbouring regions: https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=0900001680712371

⁵ Resolution 376(2014) : <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?p=&id=2248385&Site=COE&direct=true>

⁶ Details of the contributions per project can be found in the appendix.

Themes and areas of co-operation

The forty-seven member States of the Council of Europe committed themselves to apply provisions of the European Charter of Local Self-Government, which are complemented by the thematic recommendations of the Congress. In addition to these standards of local and regional democracy, specific needs of the beneficiaries and the local context are taken into account to adapt the methodology of co-operation activities. They are therefore the outcome of an approach based on dialogue and partnership.

1. Encouraging dialogue between local and regional authorities and central government, building the capacities of national associations of local and regional authorities

The right of local and regional authorities to be consulted by central government is one of the main provisions of the Charter. The integration of this right into member States' legislation and the complexity involved in putting it into practice are regularly underlined in the monitoring of the application of the Charter. The right to consultation is therefore a priority for the Congress; and in addition to the numerous recommendations and resolutions adopted on this subject, new guidelines on consultation mechanisms are currently being drafted.

The Congress, however, does not seek to promote a uniform consultation process across Europe. In fact, it is up to States and their local and regional authorities to decide on the consultation model which best suits the context in their country. Moreover, given the asymmetrical nature of the relationship between local and national levels – central authorities represent the interests of the State as a whole, while local and regional authorities represent those of the citizens living in their territory –, the Congress defends the role of national associations of local and regional authorities as key partners of both the central government and of the authorities they represent. It is the associations' duty to advocate the interests of local and regional authorities and to hold internal consultations with their members on subjects relevant to local and regional democracy.

The Congress offers its expertise to stakeholders who wish to strengthen local and regional authorities' right to be consulted by central government. It also provides support to national associations of local and regional authorities who wish to take steps to ensure that they have an impact on the dialogue with different levels of government. The following detailed examples highlight the Congress' various interventions in this respect, be it the introduction of an institutionalised consultation mechanism or measures to build associations' advocacy capacities, a political mediation between several associations of local and regional authorities, or the strengthening of the institutional and/or administrative capacities of an association.

Albania was the first member State to seek the Congress' assistance in improving and increasing consultation of local authorities. The Albanian authorities embarked, in 2013, on major reforms in terms of administrative and territorial decentralisation and organisation. Their determination has been decisive. A Consultative Council of Local and Central Authorities was established in January 2017: it is an institutionalised consultative body where national associations of local and regional authorities represent all local and regional authorities on a parity basis.

The Congress provided legislative assistance, including a long and intense process of political mediation, which made it possible to incorporate the right of local and regional authorities to be consulted into the 2015-2020 National Decentralisation Strategy and subsequently into the Organic Law on Local Self-Government adopted in December 2015. It led to the drafting of the Council of Ministers' Decision on the establishment of the Consultative Council in late 2016. It was within the framework of this new body that the Albanian associations of local and regional authorities were provided with the opportunity to present their proposals on the Law on Local Finances, most of which were taken into account in the final text which came into force in May 2017. Subsequently, they have discussed about the budgetary stances for 2018.

This result corresponds to the initial objective of the project to strengthen the legislative process and decentralisation by means of increased dialogue with the central authorities and co-operation between local and regional authorities. However, the Congress' intervention took place in an extremely polarised and tense political context, in which local and regional authorities, represented by strongly polarised associations, were neither in a position to present their concerns to central government nor to identify joint lines of action.

Since 2012, the Congress has maintained regular dialogue with all stakeholders, including the political parties, with a view to the setting up of a joint platform for dialogue, which would bring together all national associations of local authorities. The Congress had to use the various means available, in particular the members and the leadership of the Congress, and various Albanian and European experts, to contribute to numerous exchanges, meetings or consultations with the mayors in all Albanian local authorities.

Although this mediation, met with outbreaks of political tension, finally led to the establishment and institutionalisation of a genuine mechanism of consultation and dialogue, the representation of local authorities on a pluralistic platform remains a challenge in Albania. It is with hope that the national and local authorities do their utmost to ensure that the Albanian Consultative Council becomes a sustainable mechanism, which will serve as an example for other member States.

Strengthening the right of local and regional authorities to be consulted also requires strengthening the capacities of their associations. The co-operation with the Communities Association of **Armenia** (CAA) highlights the Congress' contribution in this respect.

The activities implemented together with the CAA pursue several objectives: to support the various statutory bodies of the Association and its secretariat in developing their institutional capacities; motivate members of the Association to become more involved in advocating with the central government, by providing them with the means to do so; promote the establishment of a network of institutional partners; and improve communication with the public.

Following the recommendations of the evaluation of the CAA's situation in 2014, the Congress supported the CAA in developing a culture of participation and consultation of its members, and to actively involve them in communal forms of decision-making. Initial efforts in this area have been effective, leading, in 2016, to the adoption of a new five-year strategy for the Association, the revision of its statute and, in 2017, the adoption of the Advocacy Strategy and the holding of its first General Assembly for a number of years. This General Assembly provided the opportunity to elect the President and the statutory bodies of the Association.

Following these reforms, the Association has been increasing its capacity to regularly address proposals to the central government on priority political issues or in response to legislative proposals. In line with its policy advocacy objectives, and in order to represent the needs and unified position of Armenian communities, seven policy position papers were developed in 2017 and adopted by the CAA statutory bodies. These statements were addressing the administrative-territorial reform and decentralisation in Armenia. Moreover, the Association has advocated the need for joint development of a decentralisation roadmap with the Government.

Furthermore, the Association pursued efforts to formalise the consultations between the national and local level in a mutually acceptable format and to improve the partnership with the national stakeholders. In 2017, the CAA organised two high-level events: the Forum on Local Democracy in Armenia (on 10 November), in co-operation with the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Development (MTAD); and the Consultative meeting between the Republican Council of the CAA and the Government of Armenia, led by the President of Armenia (on 8-9 December). The Forum, which was attended by more than 300 participants, focused on discussing the plans and prospects for the decentralisation of competencies and finances in the context of territorial administrative reform in Armenia, while the consultation held in December was an exchange between the mayors and the Government on mutual expectations vis-à-vis the local government reform agenda.

The CAA, again with the backing of the Congress, is henceforth focusing on the need to ensure greater transparency in its management and in its decision-making bodies. In this regard, Financial and Human Resources (HR) management manuals and a draft Financial Sustainability Strategy have been developed. This lays the ground for the introduction of new procedures for organising work and internal consultation. Moreover, the CAA established six thematic committees which enable its members to participate in, and make a greater contribution to, the work of the Association and thus better defend their interests vis-à-vis central government. The meetings of the thematic committees are taking place as of February 2018.

The Association is continuing to develop its administrative structures and statutory bodies, its network of experts, and to improve its public image and communication capacities – with the introduction of a new graphic charter, a new website and the organisation of joint events with the Government. To support the CAA in its organisational development, the CAA Secretariat is strengthened by increasing the number of its staff members, and by building their operational capacities, including in the areas of advocacy, fundraising and financial management.

Lastly, the CAA reinforced its partnerships, as reflected in the joint organisation of the conference “Women and local governance” between MTAD, CAA, GIZ, SDC, USAID, UNDP and the Congress on 7 March 2018 in Yerevan. The Chair of the CAA Gender, Social and Healthcare Issues Committee addressed a call on the Government to strengthen women’s political participation/representation in the local governance system of Armenia, based on the statement adopted by the Committee. This is a proof that the CAA is increasingly recognised as a key actor in the development of local democracy in Armenia by the central authorities, its institutional partners, and the general public.

In addition to these two examples, the approach taken by the Congress is to establish close and lasting relations with the different national associations of local and regional authorities in member States. This applies, for example, to **Ukraine**, where regular meetings are held between representatives of the associations,⁷ members of the Ukrainian delegation to the Congress, and the beneficiaries of the project implemented in Ukraine. Moreover, a workshop on “Gender equality at local level: challenges and opportunities in Ukraine” was organised jointly with the Association of Ukrainian Cities (AUC) and gathered together representatives of the management board and of the regional branches of the association. They debated with peers from European countries on the role of national associations of local authorities in integrating a gender perspective in their practices and procedures, and in supporting their members to promote gender equality at local level. In **Georgia**, co-operation with the National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia (NALAG) in 2017, led to the drafting of proposals for amendments to the Code of Local Self-Government concerning citizens’ participation in local affairs.

The Congress also encourages exchanges between the associations of different countries. For example, in June 2017, under the auspices of the Congress, NALAG (Georgia), the Congress of Local Authorities of Moldova (CALM-Republic of Moldova) and the AUC (Ukraine) signed a Memorandum of Understanding to confirm their intention to strengthen their co-operation. The representatives of the national associations of **Armenia, the Republic of Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine**, as well as representatives of **Azerbaijan and Belarus**, the Community of practice on local democracy,⁸ established in January 2016, has been an excellent platform for networking and holding discussions on ways to make real improvements to the quality of local democracy, particularly in the current context of administrative and territorial reforms. In the last meeting of the Community of practice in December 2016, the representatives of the associations reflected on the follow-up to their transnational relations in the future with a view to ensure the sustainability of their actions to strengthen local governance in the region.

2. Building the capacities of local and regional elected officials as agents of change

Delivering meaningful, successful decentralisation requires ongoing political support from all the relevant stakeholders, both authorities and citizens. It also requires these stakeholders to have a sense of ownership over, and be deeply committed to, local governance in keeping with European principles.

Mayors and local councillors are the level of government closest to citizens and have primary responsibility for promoting the principles of democracy, in particular local democracy, and the values of their community. As well as complying with national legislation and exercising the competences assigned to them, local and regional elected officials are also responsible for ensuring transparency in public action, adopting appropriate measures to prevent corruption, and developing democratic tools for enhancing citizen participation in local affairs.

That is the basic premise behind the Congress Secretariat’s efforts to design dedicated activities for mayors and local councillors. These activities help to promote the principles of the Charter and good governance, and to support mayors and councillors in adopting innovative and participatory approaches, in response to citizens’ wishes and needs.

The Congress has developed a “Leaders for Change” programme in the form of a series of workshops aimed at facilitating peer-to-peer exchange and the sharing of good practice with Congress members. The programme is complemented by presentations by national and international

⁷ The Association of Ukrainian Cities, the Association of Village and Settlement Councils of Ukraine, and the Ukrainian Association of District and Regional Councils.

⁸ The Community of practice on local democracy is a network of experts and practitioners in the fields of local governance and ethics, representatives of national associations of local and regional authorities, and civil society.

experts on specific topics. Focusing on themes such as the role and responsibilities of elected officials, communication with citizens, promoting values within the local area, and effective and ethical strategic decision-making, these discussions afford participants an opportunity to identify ways of putting these principles into practice and changing how local affairs are managed.

Armenia was the first country to be offered a programme of this kind. The scheme, in which some twenty mayors took part from 2013 to 2016, helped to create a space for experimenting with citizen participation.⁹ At the project's closing conference in December 2016, the Armenian mayors acknowledged that they were now in a better position to involve citizens in decision-making and in the development of their community. They emphasised the importance of interacting with Congress members, who encouraged them in their drive to innovate, as a way of bringing about meaningful change in their community.

This approach has also been very successful in Ukraine, where, since 2014, over one hundred and fifty mayors and two hundred and twenty local councillors have benefitted from Congress activities. Likewise, under the regional programme "Partnership for Good Governance", over sixty mayors from **Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine** have taken part in thematic activities and peer-to-peer exchanges on public ethics, transparency and citizen participation. They have been supported through practical tools –four country-specific handbooks on transparency and citizen participation¹⁰ and a Management of change: a tool guide for local and regional authorities¹¹– which will guide and encourage them to effectively prevent corruption risks, promote citizen participation, manage the change and develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions. Such tools are available on the website and through the national associations of local authorities.

The Congress' peer-to-peer exchange programme helps to disseminate new practices and to forge closer ties between elected officials in the same country. This modus operandi has also led to the creation of various policy-making platforms and opportunities for experimentation. The inspiration that mayors and local councillors draw from it, the improved understanding of the principles of local democracy and their rights, and the heightened awareness of what can be achieved through co-operation and joint action encourages them to invest more in their local populations, and in upholding the interests of those populations, including within national associations.

3. Making young local leaders aware of the principles of local democracy

The Revised Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life, adopted by the Congress in 2003, states that *"participation in the democratic life of any community is about more than voting or standing for election, although these are important elements. Participation and active citizenship is about having the right, the means, the space and the opportunity and where necessary the support to participate in and influence decisions and engage in actions and activities so as to contribute to building a better society"*. Guided by this notion of participation in public affairs, the Congress has developed co-operation activities geared towards youth participation. These activities are aimed at young people who are already engaged at local level, and who have been elected to the local council for the first time or who might run for office in future elections, or who represent civil society or the media.

The seminars for young local leaders were designed in response to the situation in **Ukraine**, where a strong desire for renewal of the political class had been making itself felt. Since 2014, for example, nearly three hundred young Ukrainians have taken part in the exchanges proposed by the Congress. Similar activities have also been trialled in **Armenia**, where around fifty participants have taken part.

The seminars have a number of objectives: firstly to make young people aware of the principles of local and regional democracy, while at the same time supporting democratic renewal, secondly to give participants an opportunity to enhance their capacity to develop and implement initiatives involving both citizens and local authorities and, lastly, to give them the desire and the means to participate in local and/or regional elections. Each seminar is followed by a brainstorming workshop at which participants develop ideas for practical initiatives to be implemented back in their own communities.

⁹ The experiences of Armenian elected officials have been compiled into a publication entitled *Toolkit on Citizen Participation* for the attention of their peers: <https://rm.coe.int/16806cf43c>

¹⁰ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/congress/-/handbooks-on-transparency-and-citizen-participation>

¹¹ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/congress/-/management-of-change-a-tool-guide-for-local-and-regional-authorities>

In addition, every year since 2014, the Congress has been inviting a delegation of young people who attended the seminars in **Ukraine** to take part in study visits organised alongside the World Forum for Democracy. To date, some sixty young Ukrainians have been able to meet and talk with elected officials, journalists and activists from other countries, and to learn about good practice in local governance from French and German local authorities.

An assessment of the impact of the youth activities in **Ukraine** was conducted. Like local elected officials who have taken part in activities implemented by the Congress, the first-hand accounts of former participants highlight the importance of contact with other young people, and show how their meetings with Congress members have inspired them. There is, in particular, evidence of initiatives being implemented by one in five young local leaders.

Facilitating interaction between young local leaders and local elected representatives (mayors and local councillors), key players in local and regional democracy in Ukraine, has led to the creation of an informal support network, where participants in the same activity continue to share advice and good practice after the seminars have ended. It was important, therefore, for the Congress to encourage the continued operation of this network, and to induce young local leaders, mayors and municipal councillors from different regions of Ukraine to carry on working together.

The first Local Democracy Forum, held in Ukraine in July 2017, marked a first step in this direction. Mayors, local councillors and young local leaders got the chance to discuss topical issues related to the principles of good local governance, in particular youth participation in local public affairs, transparency in public decision-making, gender equality or the implementation of new democratic tools. Among other things, the discussions provided participants with a better insight into everyone's role and the challenges encountered in their mutual efforts to build local democracy in Ukraine. The Forum ended with the adoption of a joint declaration in which young local leaders, mayors and municipal councillors reiterated their commitment and expressed their desire for closer co-operation with the Congress.

The Congress Secretariat will endeavour, through new co-operation projects, to meet this demand in an appropriate manner, not only in terms of the format of future activities aimed at elected officials and young local leaders in Ukraine, but also by targeting other beneficiary countries.

4. Local pilot initiatives

Local democracy, which is crucial to the proper functioning of a democratic society, cannot prosper unless local and regional elected officials are required to act with integrity and to set an example. They must set aside their own personal interests when making decisions and bear in mind that the mandate conferred on them by the ballot box is only temporary. It is crucial that local and regional authorities respond to citizens' needs and expectations quickly, and in a transparent, ethical and accountable manner, while at the same time encouraging greater citizen participation based on regular and open exchanges.

In addition to the policy-making platform and "leadership" activities described above, the Congress offers mayors a space for experimentation and "learning by doing", along with operational support for developing ways and means of delivering good local governance. Quite apart from funding local initiatives, for example, the Congress offers pilot local authorities tailor-made support and expertise, and enables them to share results, experiences and new practices, in a variety of ways.

In **Armenia**, four towns were selected in 2015, at the end of the leadership programme, to explore different aspects of citizen participation (local development priorities, infrastructure projects, budgetary planning). The idea was also to implement new provisions of the organic law adopted in 2013, following ratification of the Additional Protocol to the Charter of Local Self-Government (CETS No. 207), and to embrace new processes for citizen participation in decision-making.

Encouraged by its positive experience in Armenia, the Congress employed a similar scheme in the "Partnership for Good Governance" between the European Union and the Council of Europe, thus enabling twelve more municipalities (three per country, in **Armenia, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine**) to devise procedures and adopt mechanisms for more effective and integrated governance, and greater citizen participation.¹² These initiatives were led by mayors

¹² The call for projects can be consulted at the following address:

interested in delivering meaningful change in their municipalities, who, through an inclusive approach involving citizens, delivered a better quality of local democracy and of public services for their communities. The fact that some tools are now being promoted at national level, with the opportunity to be replicated in other municipalities, highlights their success towards the establishment of a professional, depoliticised, accountable and ethical public administration. In addition, their results were disseminated to mayors in other countries by means of a regional conference in December 2017, which favoured the sustainability of the reforms made and will encourage others to replicate and generate more efficient, accountable and transparent policy-making in their own municipalities.

In addition, in July 2017 the Congress selected five more municipalities following a call for projects in **Ukraine**.¹³ The selected municipalities have benefited from peer reviews, expert support and funding in order to adopt a more transparent and participatory mode of governance, and to promote a gender perspective in their public policies. Mayors and their local administrations were enabled to put new skills in practice, using the tools, methodologies and examples of good practice exchanged during the project activities. A number of local policies and mechanisms were introduced in these five municipalities, improving the dialogue and strengthening the co-operation between local authorities and citizens. For a mayor who is determined to lead change and for a local government that aims to be accountable, transparent and fully democratic, these policies represent a concrete and highly visible means to demonstrate this commitment to the community. Finally, an important bridge of trust was built between the government and its constituencies, enhancing both the quantity and quality of citizen engagement in local decision-making. Consultative councils, forums and opinion polling mechanisms are just a few examples of good practice that have resulted from local initiatives.

Co-operation activities as part of the Council of Europe's policy towards neighbouring regions

The co-operation programme "South-Med Partnership" was adopted by the Congress Bureau on 10 February 2017¹⁴ with the aim of implementing co-operation projects with southern Mediterranean countries, in particular Morocco and Tunisia, following the Secretariat's visits to Rabat and Tunis in November 2016. In December 2016 and in February 2017, the Bureau appointed a Thematic Spokesperson and three substitute Spokespersons on the South-Med Partnership. In this context, the Partner for Local Democracy status introduced by the Congress in 2014 is a means of strengthening political dialogue, decentralised co-operation and experience sharing, by enabling members of the delegations from the beneficiary countries to participate in the work of the Congress without voting rights.

This programme is built upon the following five pillars and seeks to put the Congress' expertise and the experience of its members at the service of strengthening local and regional governance in the southern Mediterranean countries:

- enhancing political dialogue between European elected representatives and their counterparts from the South and increasing decentralised co-operation between local and regional authorities on the two sides of the Mediterranean;
- legislative assistance and expertise in drafting and implementing legislation concerning decentralisation and local and regional governance; and assisting with the electoral process and, where applicable, observing local and regional elections;
- awareness-raising and training for local and regional elected representatives and their officials, with a particular focus on the role of women and young local leaders;
- strengthening the role and capacities of associations of local and regional authorities (especially in terms of leadership);
- supporting the development of participatory democracy, with a particular focus on the role of young people, women and civil society.

<https://wcd.coe.int/com.instranet.InstraServlet?command=com.instranet.CmdBlobGet&InstranetImage=2950123&SecMode=1&DocId=2391056&Usage=2>

¹³ The call for projects can be consulted at the following address:

<https://mycloud.coe.int/index.php/s/Dw70WwSNnwpt3Xg#pdfviewer>

¹⁴ For further information, see document [CG32\(2017\)26](#) "Congress South-Med Partnership", submitted to members of the Congress on 16 March 2017 for information.

The Congress helped draw up the law on advanced regionalisation in **Morocco**, adopted in May 2015 and which paved the way for local and regional elections in September 2015, and was involved in drafting a chapter on “local democracy” of **Tunisia**’s new Constitution, adopted in January 2014. In December 2016, the Congress contributed to the discussion on Tunisia’s draft legislation on local elections, through comparative research on the right to vote of members of the armed forces; the enactment of this legislation in January 2017 has prepared the ground for Tunisia’s first-ever local elections on 6 May 2018. In July 2017, the Congress commented on four aspects of the draft Code of local authorities (competences, local goods and services, finances and control) and, in September 2017, discussed these texts with members of the Assembly of People’s Representatives. The Congress is currently preparing eight implementation decrees of the Code on the statute and organisation of elected councils.

A joint study visit for a delegation of Moroccan and Tunisian partners took place during the 32nd Session of the Congress in March 2017. The visit provided an opportunity for peer-to-peer exchanges on the principles of local and regional democracy, and on the framework required for decentralised co-operation. Among those taking part in the exchanges were some key players in this area, namely the Presidents of the Association of the Regions of Morocco (ARM) and of the Moroccan Association of Presidents of Municipal Councils (AMPCC), the mayor of the City of Rabat, the Director General for Local Authorities, and representatives of the Parliament and the Economic, Social and Environmental Council (CESE) in the case of **Morocco**, and the Chair of the Commission on Decentralisation of the Assembly of People’s Representatives (ARP), the president of the Independent High Authority for Elections (ISIE), the president and executive director of the National Federation of Tunisian Towns and Cities (FNVT), the Director General for Local Authorities (DGCL), and the director of the Decentralisation Training and Support Centre (CFAD) in the case of **Tunisia**. During this visit, moreover, each of the delegations expressed an interest in exploring the possibility of obtaining “Partner for Local Democracy” status with the Congress.

Specific capacity-building activities were organised to support the associations of local and regional authorities in Morocco and Tunisia. Training in project management was offered to the Secretariat of the National Federation of Tunisian Towns (FNVT). A study on the various consultation mechanisms found in Europe has been prepared, in order to identify the most appropriate consultation models for the beneficiaries.

Several activities were organised to support the development of participatory democracy. A conference on “Building an inclusive community: integrating migrants, fighting violent extremism, involving citizens” was co-organised with the City of Rabat on 20-22 November 2017. The conference brought together elected representatives and administrative officials from Moroccan towns and cities, as well as their European counterparts who shared their experiences. In Tunisia, a conference on “Women in local politics” was held jointly by the Tunisian Ministry of Women, Family Affairs and Childhood and Ministry of Local Affairs and the Environment and the Council of Europe’s Directorate General of Democracy in Tunis on 26-27 September 2017. The conference aimed to promote exchanges of views and experiences on national and international legal frameworks, the challenges of implementing legislative safeguards and the role of different stakeholders in strengthening women’s participation in local affairs.

Capacity building and awareness-raising of elected representatives to the principles of decentralisation were also at the heart of the Congress activities, with the production of a study on the skills and training resources of elected representatives in Morocco and the organisation of a parliamentary colloquium on “Regionalisation in Morocco: opportunities and challenges for consolidating decentralised governance”. In Tunisia, the Congress organised a training of trainers of the CFAD on political mediation, in the perspective of the conflicts that could emerge following the first municipal elections of 6 May 2018.

Lastly, a number of key documents on European principles and standards in the field of local democracy have been produced in Arabic, in particular the European Charter of Local Self-Government, the revised European Charter for the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life, and the European Code of Conduct for the political integrity of local and regional elected representatives. These documents are available on the Congress’ website and also used by other Council of Europe entities in their work.

Conclusion

Through its co-operation activities, the Congress contributes to promoting local and regional democracy in the beneficiary countries, thus encouraging the implementation of the principles of the European Charter of Local Self-Government and the recommendations and resolutions adopted by the Congress.

Its approach based on regular political dialogue, peer-to-peer exchanges and proven expertise helps to create a network of players committed to improving the quality of local and regional democracy across Europe, as well as in the Council of Europe's neighbouring regions.

The Congress provides local and regional authorities, their associations, and young people engaged at local level with a platform where they can express their aspirations, needs and concerns, and share their experiences and innovative practices with Congress members and with each other. This proximity to field work opens up new avenues to explore and feeds into the Congress' work and thematic debates.

This operational component of the Congress' actions is a response to a growing demand from beneficiaries, and affords an opportunity to support them in addressing the current challenges they face. It is vital that the Congress continue engaging in these interventions in the field and to this end, the Congress Secretariat is currently developing proposals for new bilateral projects in Eastern Europe (in Armenia, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine) and in the Southern Mediterranean countries (Morocco and Tunisia), and projects focusing on cross-cutting themes related to local governance, such as the fight against corruption, the promotion of human rights at local level, gender equality, integration of all the various population groups living on the same territory and combating radicalisation.

APPENDIX – SUMMARY OF PROJECTS (Situation at 16 March 2017)**I. Bilateral projects implemented in Council of Europe member countries****a. Projects in progress****ARMENIA** [Council of Europe Action Plan for Armenia 2015-2018](#)¹⁵**Project title** Enhancing the capacities of the Communities Association of Armenia (CAA)**Dates** November 2014 – December 2018**Budget** 1 104 500 €**Funding** Federal Government of Switzerland

Objectives

To establish the regular participation of local authorities in framing national policies within a sustainable institutional framework and to formalise a consultation mechanism between the CAA and the Armenian government;
 To support the CAA in the process of achieving financial sustainability;
 To strengthen the capacity of the CAA to improve its image as a recognised political institution and communicate effectively.

Main activities

Consolidation of the CAA's decision-making procedures to make them more transparent and democratic: revision of the CAA Charter in 2016 and clear definition of the functions of the governing bodies, new elections for the Presidency in 2017, Republican Council (108 members), Board (36 members) and six standing committees, with a gender representation quota;
 Regular meetings of the governing bodies and consultations with members (regional seminars and specialised working groups);
 Six thematic committees established in 2017 on: Financial, economic, budgetary issues; Legal affairs; Education, culture, sport and youth issues; Sustainable development; Gender, social and healthcare issues; and Rural, mountainous, borderline communities' development and inter-community cooperation;
 1st General Assembly for more than 10 years organised in February 2017, with high attendance (400 mayors);
 5 meetings of the Republican Council and 2 meetings of the Board in 2017; 1 meeting of the Board in 2018;
 1 meeting of the Oversight Committee of the CAA in 2017 and 5 meetings of Committees in 2018
 Adoption of 7 policy papers addressed to the Government;
 Strengthening of the association's capacities to advocate, with input from experts and implementation of trainings;
 Modernisation of the association's communication tools (visual identity, website etc.);
 Restructuring of internal financial procedures;
 Forum for local democracy organised in cooperation with the government on Self-Government Day (10 November), themes: transfer of competencies to local level and financial decentralisation;
 Consultative meeting between the Republican Council of the CAA and the Government of Armenia led by the President of Armenia (on 8-9

¹⁵ <https://rm.coe.int/1680471d82>

December): an exchange between the mayors and the Government on mutual expectations vis-a-vis the local government reform agenda.

b. Completed projects

ALBANIA	Co-operation programme for Albania 2012-2014 ¹⁶ Co-operation programme for Albania 2015-2017 ¹⁷
Project title	Strengthening local and regional government structures and cooperation between local elected representatives in Albania ¹⁸
Congress Component	<i>To build a sustainable, pluralistic and unified platform of dialogue for local government representatives in Albania</i>
Dates	October 2012 – June 2017
Budget	1 630 473 € (of which 637 018 € for the Congress component)
Funding	Federal Government of Switzerland
Objectives	<p>Strengthening local and regional government structures;</p> <p>Strengthening cooperation between local elected representatives in Albania to ensure effective decentralisation and local self-government, in line with the principles enshrined in the European Charter of Local Self-Government</p>
Main activities	<p>3 regional workshops for 150 local government representatives to contribute to the ongoing legislative process, as regards territorial and administrative reform;</p> <p>5 round tables between experts and representatives of municipalities on specific issues related to the territorial and administrative reform;</p> <p>Development of a report on the functions of local authorities and their finances, with 49 recommendations;</p> <p>Study on reinforcing the political role of local and regional authorities and their associations in Albania, with 11 guidelines for improved cooperation between Albanian associations for local authorities;</p> <p>3 workshops on "Mayors, leaders for change";</p> <p>Study visit by 8 municipal representatives to Switzerland to observe Swiss practices of direct democracy;</p> <p>Pilot initiatives on direct democracy in the municipalities of Tirana and Mallakstra: 15 meetings with 250 citizens, schoolchildren, members of municipal staff and municipal councillors;</p> <p>Study visit by 5 representatives of local and regional authorities and 1 representative of the Latvian Agency for Implementation of Territorial Reform to observe the functioning of consultation in the country and the role of the Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments;</p> <p>National conference for representatives of newly formed municipalities, organised jointly with the government, CoE, SDC, USAID, UNDP and SIDA, on the challenges following Territorial and Administrative Reform, and the needs to improve local democracy in Albania;</p> <p>Contribution to the National Strategy on Decentralisation 2015-2020, amendments on the right to be consulted in law 8652/2000, and Organic Law on Local Self-Government;</p> <p>Establishment of the Local Self-Government and Central Government Consultative Council, on the basis of the draft Decision of the Council of</p>

¹⁶ <https://rm.coe.int/16802ed0b9>

¹⁷ <https://rm.coe.int/16802f95e4>

¹⁸ Programme jointly implemented with the Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform, a unit of the Directorate General of Democracy of the Council of Europe Secretariat.

Ministers on the Consultative Council, explanatory memorandum and draft rules of procedures developed;

Consultancy assistance and peer-to-peer approach training for the Consultative Council/Technical Secretariat;

4 regional workshops to inform Albanian mayors of the setting up of the Consultative Council and explain how it works.

Publications and tools Study on the strengthening of the political role of Local and Regional Authorities and their Associations in Albania [[English](#)]¹⁹

¹⁹ <https://rm.coe.int/168071af10>

ARMENIA

[Council of Europe Action Plan for Armenia 2012-2014](#)²⁰
[Council of Europe Action Plan for Armenia 2015-2018](#)²¹

Project title	Support for the consolidation of local democracy in Armenia ²²
Congress Component	<i>Strengthening local elected representatives' leadership</i>
Dates	October 2013 - December 2016 ²³
Budget	1 579 301 € (of which 606 419 € for the Congress component)
Funding	Government of Denmark
Objectives	<p>To establish a legal framework in line with European principles and standards of local democracy;</p> <p>To raise awareness of these principles and standards;</p> <p>To strengthen ethical governance and the prevention of corruption;</p> <p>To reinforce leadership and governance skills and capacities of local authorities;</p> <p>To strengthen the involvement of young people and create mechanisms enabling citizens to participate in decision-making at local level.</p>
Main activities	<p>Consultation with mayors and councillors on the implementation of Recommendation 351 (2014) on local democracy in Armenia, resulting in a "Call to the government of Armenia", made public in January 2015, by the three associations dealing with local self-government issues;</p> <p>2 series of regional seminars on the participation of citizens in decision-making at local level in Armenia, attended by over 170 Armenian mayors and councillors;</p> <p>Leadership programme for a group of Armenian mayors in the form of 6 thematic interactive workshops aimed at supporting them in their role as leaders of change;</p> <p>Support programme for the implementation of citizen participation initiatives in 4 Armenian communities, to enable mayors having participated in the leadership programme to put the skills developed into practice - these initiatives were followed up by peer reviews;</p> <p>3 regional workshops for newly elected municipal councillors and councillors of merged communities;</p> <p>2 seminars on European principles of local democracy for young local leaders;</p> <p>Closing ceremony for the project to provide the Armenian participants (mayors, councillors and young local leaders) with an opportunity to present and share their experience with their peers, local and international experts, representatives of the Armenian government, associations of local authorities, as well as members of the Congress.</p>

Publications and tools Toolkit "Enhancing Citizen Participation in Armenia" [[English](#)²⁴ | [Armenian](#)²⁵]

²⁰ <https://rm.coe.int/16802ed0ba>

²¹ <https://rm.coe.int/1680471d82>

²² Programme jointly implemented with the Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform, a unit of the Directorate General of Democracy of the Council of Europe Secretariat.

²³ A follow-up to this project was submitted for funding in January 2017 and is still pending.

²⁴ <https://rm.coe.int/16806cf43c>

²⁵ <https://rm.coe.int/16806cf43e>

UKRAINE	Council of Europe Action Plan for Ukraine 2015-2017 ²⁶
Project title	Promoting local democracy in Ukraine ²⁷
Dates	July 2015 – December 2017 + January – February 2018 ²⁸
Budget	1 826 949 € (2015-2017) + 123 108 € (2018)
Funding	Action Plan for Ukraine donors ²⁹
Objectives	<p>To support local elected representatives in the strengthening of their institutional and leadership capacities, to encourage them to be more responsive, be accountable in the exercise of their powers and better involve citizens in their policies;</p> <p>To support the implementation of local self-government reform by strengthening the capacities of local elected representatives to provide better coordination, planning and management;</p> <p>To promote active democratic citizenship and support the implementation of local democratic participatory processes, including the observation of local elections.</p>
Main activities	<p>2015-2017:</p> <p>6 "Mayors, leaders for change" workshops, involving over 130 Ukrainian mayors;</p> <p>6 "Councillors: everyday actors of local democracy" workshops, with over 200 participants in total;</p> <p>1 workshop organised specifically for the municipal council of the city of Kyiv (50 participants);</p> <p>3 round tables organised in partnership with the Ukrainian delegation to the Congress and the Association of Ukrainian Cities;</p> <p>1 round table on good governance in metropolitan areas;</p> <p>7 seminars for over 200 young local leaders;</p> <p>3 study visits organised for 50 young local leaders, at the occasion of the World Forum for Democracy;</p> <p>The first Forum for local democracy in Ukraine, with the participation of around 100 mayors, municipal councillors and young local leaders;</p> <p>5 municipalities selected to implement local initiatives for more transparent and participatory governance (involving financial support, input from specialist experts, exchanges between peers and a study visit by mayors during the 33rd session of the Congress).</p> <p>Discussion paper on gender equality in local political life in Ukraine;</p> <p>Meeting and debate with representatives of the Ukrainian Parliament on the law on the status of municipal councillors;</p> <p>Seminar for exchange of good practices following the implementation of initiatives supported by the Congress, in Kyiv, Ukraine (around 75 participants).</p>

²⁶ <https://rm.coe.int/16802f600e>

²⁷ This project is a follow-up to activities implemented within the framework of the "Immediate measures package for Ukraine" in 2014 (275 969 €) and the project entitled "Strengthening the capacity of local authorities in Ukraine" in 2015, funded by Denmark (184 462 €).

²⁸ A follow-up to this project under the framework of the Action Plan for Ukraine 2018-2021 (approved by the Committee of Ministers on 21 February 2018) was submitted for funding in November 2017 and is still pending.

²⁹ Funded by 20 member States: Germany, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Czech Republic, Romania, United Kingdom, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey.

2018:

External assessment of the results of the project “Promoting local democracy in Ukraine”;

1 workshop on the challenges and opportunities for gender equality at the local level in Ukraine, jointly organised with the Association of Ukrainian Cities (AUC).

Publications and tools *Metropolitan Governance in Europe and in Ukraine: Legitimacy, Ownership and Efficiency* [[English](#)³⁰ | [Ukrainian](#)³¹];
“Study on the Ukrainian Law on the Status of Local Councillors” [[English](#)³² | [Ukrainian](#)³³];
Study on “Powers and Duties of Local Councillors in the Framework of Decentralisation of Power in Ukraine” [[English](#)³⁴];
Discussion paper on “Gender Equality in Local Political Life and the Gender Perspective in Local Policies in Ukraine”.

³⁰ <https://rm.coe.int/metropolitan-governance-in-eur-and-ukr-eng/168078549e>

³¹ <https://rm.coe.int/metropolitan-governance-ukr-ukr-web/1680785e45>

³² <https://rm.coe.int/2018-01-24-study-law-on-local-councillors-eng/1680783ffd>

³³ <https://rm.coe.int/2018-01-25-study-law-on-local-councillors-ukr/1680784064>

³⁴ <https://rm.coe.int/study-on-powers-and-duties-of-local-councillors-in-the-framework-of-de/168078fafa>

UKRAINE

Project title	Strengthening the capacity of local authorities in Ukraine ³⁵
<i>Congress Component</i>	<i>Congress post-monitoring dialogue and training of young political leaders</i>
Dates	April 2014 – May 2015
Budget	600 000 € (of which 120 000 € for the Congress component)
Funding	Government of Denmark
Objectives	Improving the quality of local self-governance; Developing national legal framework in line with the principles of the European Charter for Local self-government and standards on local democracy
Main activities	3 regional seminars in Chernihiv, Odessa or Dnipro for around 75 young local leaders to exchange on the European standards and of the principles of local democracy; 2 thematic round tables, in Kyiv, on constitutional revision and transfer of competencies and on constitutional reform and the financial independence of local authorities, organised with the relevant ministry around the main Congress recommendations.

³⁵ Programme jointly implemented with the Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform, a unit of the Directorate General of Democracy of the Council of Europe Secretariat.

UKRAINE

Project title	Immediate Measures Package for Ukraine
<i>Congress Component</i>	<i>Local Democracy</i>
Dates	April 2014 – December 2014
Budget	2 500 000 € (of which 376 000 € for the Congress component)
Funding	Pool of donors
Objectives	Implementation of democratic reforms in line with the principles and standards of local and regional democracy; Improvement of local political governance.
Main activities	Observation of the pre-term municipal elections on 25 May 2014; High level visit to Kyiv and Odessa; 1 thematic roundtable as part of the Congress post-monitoring dialogue with Ukrainian national authorities; 1 regional seminar for around 25 young local leaders on European standards of local and regional democracy; 1 study visit for 20 young local leaders in Strasbourg, in parallel to the 2014 World Forum for democracy; 1 workshop “Mayors, leaders for change”, for 30 mayors who have been newly elected in May 2014.

II. Multilateral projects implemented in the framework of specific partnerships

Partnership for good governance between the European Union and the Council of Europe for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus (2015-2017)³⁶

Project title	Thematic programme “Strengthening institutional frameworks for local governance” ³⁷
Dates	January 2015 – December 2017
Budget	1 332 745 €
Funding	European Union
Objectives	<p>To support the ongoing process of local self-government reform in the beneficiary countries;</p> <p>To promote the adoption of ethical standards and practices by local elected representatives in the region;</p> <p>To support the alignment of local administrations’ financial and human resources management with European standards, led in co-operation with the Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform.</p>
Main activities	<p>3 meetings of the Steering Committee of the thematic programme;</p> <p>Introductory conference in Tbilisi, Georgia, with around 100 participants from the 6 Eastern Partnership countries (local elected representatives, members of the Congress, experts, representatives of central authorities, representatives of national associations of local and regional authorities and civil society);</p> <p>Study on the roles and responsibilities of mayors and local councillors in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus;</p> <p>7 national “Mayors, Leaders for change” workshops for 14 Armenian, 9 Georgian, 20 Moldovan and 19 Ukrainian mayors, on defining and leading successful public policies based on ethical values and standards;</p> <p>Regional seminar on "Local public ethics: from vision to action", Kyiv, Ukraine, with around 80 participants (local elected representatives, members of the Congress, experts, representatives of central authorities, representatives of national associations of local and regional authorities and civil society);</p> <p>Regional seminar on "Citizen participation: an essential tool in local democracy", Chisinau, Republic of Moldova, with around 50 participants (local elected representatives, members of the Congress, experts, representatives of central authorities, representatives of national associations of local and regional authorities and civil society);</p> <p>5 meetings of the Community of practice on local democracy in the Eastern Partnership countries in Strasbourg, France, Kyiv, Ukraine, and Tbilisi, Georgia;</p> <p>12 municipalities (in Armenia, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine) selected (benefiting from support from their peers and input from experts) to implement local initiatives for more efficient and accountable governance;</p> <p>Conference on local governance in Georgia and the effectiveness of the institutionalised mechanisms for citizen participation, for around 65 participants (representatives of central and local authorities, officials, international organisations, NALAG, members of the Congress and experts);</p>

³⁶ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/congress/european-union-council-of-europe-partnership-for-good-governance>

³⁷ Thematic programme jointly implemented with the Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform, a unit of the Directorate General of Democracy of the Council of Europe Secretariat.

Study on institutionalised citizen participation: assessment of existing mechanisms in Georgia, developed on the basis of working groups with experts and providing recommendations to amend the Code of Local Self-Government in Georgia;

Signature of a Memorandum of Understanding between the National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia, the Congress of Local Authorities from Moldova, and the Association of Ukrainian Cities;

Meeting and peer reviews on “Sharing the vision: local democracy and ethical governance in practice” for 3 Moldovan mayors implementing local initiatives and 7 mayors from the municipalities of the Stefan Voda district;

Management of change: a tool guide for local and regional authorities available in English, Armenian, Georgian, Romanian and Ukrainian;

Country-specific Handbooks on transparency and citizen participation for local and regional representatives in Armenia, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine (available in English and in their respective national languages);

Meeting on “Local initiatives: Managing and communicating the change”, Tbilisi, Georgia, with around 30 participants (mayors and project co-ordinators for the local initiatives on ethical governance and transparency, representatives of national associations of local and regional authorities, and experts);

Regional conference for exchange of good practices following the implementation of initiatives supported by the Congress, Tbilisi, Georgia, with around 100 participants (local elected representatives, experts, representatives of central authorities, representatives of national associations of local and regional authorities and civil society).

Publications and tools *Roles and responsibilities of mayors and local councillors in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus* [[English](#)³⁸ | [Russian](#)³⁹];
Institutionalised citizen participation: assessment of existing mechanisms - Georgia [[English](#)⁴⁰ | [Georgian](#)⁴¹];
Management of Change: A tool guide for local and regional authorities [[English](#)⁴² | [Armenian](#)⁴³ | [Georgian](#)⁴⁴ | [Romanian](#)⁴⁵ | [Ukrainian](#)⁴⁶];
Handbook on Transparency and Citizen Participation in Armenia [[English](#)⁴⁷ | [Armenian](#)⁴⁸];
Handbook on Transparency and Citizen Participation in Georgia [[English](#)⁴⁹ | [Georgian](#)⁵⁰];
Handbook on Transparency and Citizen Participation in the Republic of Moldova [[English](#)⁵¹ | [Romanian](#)⁵²];
Handbook on Transparency and Citizen Participation in Ukraine [[English](#)⁵³ | [Ukrainian](#)⁵⁴];

³⁸ <https://rm.coe.int/168071b235>

³⁹ <https://rm.coe.int/168071b345>

⁴⁰ <https://rm.coe.int/geo-institutionalised-citizen-participation-eng/1680784817>

⁴¹ <https://rm.coe.int/geo-institutionalised-citizen-participation-kat/1680784818>

⁴² <https://rm.coe.int/tool-guide-management-of-change-eng-web-version/16807848d6>

⁴³ <https://rm.coe.int/management-of-change-hye-web/1680786ae4>

⁴⁴ <https://rm.coe.int/management-of-change-kat-web/1680785c77>

⁴⁵ <https://rm.coe.int/management-of-change-ron-web/1680786ac6>

⁴⁶ <https://rm.coe.int/management-of-change-ukr-web/16807850ef>

⁴⁷ <https://rm.coe.int/handbook-arm-eng/168078a58c>

⁴⁸ <https://rm.coe.int/handbook-armenia-hye/168078bbe6>

⁴⁹ <https://rm.coe.int/handbook-georgia-eng/1680786b7d>

⁵⁰ <https://rm.coe.int/handbook-georgia-kat/1680793678>

⁵¹ <https://rm.coe.int/handbook-moldova-eng/168078406b>

⁵² <https://rm.coe.int/handbook-moldova-ron/1680788ff5>

⁵³ <https://rm.coe.int/handbook-ukraine-eng/168078406c>

⁵⁴ <https://rm.coe.int/handbook-ukraine-ukr/168078541c>

Film on the Thematic Programme “Strengthening institutional frameworks for local governance” [[English](#),⁵⁵ with subtitles];

Interviews on the Local Initiatives on Ethical Governance and Transparency in Armenia, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine [[YouTube playlist](#)⁵⁶].

⁵⁵ https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/eap-pcf/films/-/asset_publisher/7LWrXYWA7imH/content/ukraine-local-public-ethics-from-vision-to-action

⁵⁶ https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLMD_RYvUcCYmqXMqHLJRX_vJXdJjNS6Zq

III. Projects implemented in the framework of the Council of Europe's policy towards neighbouring regions

MOROCCO	Neighbourhood Partnership with Morocco 2015-2017 ⁵⁷
Project title	Strengthening local and regional democracy in Morocco
Dates	January 2016 – December 2017 ⁵⁸
Budget	196 770 €
Funding	Norway, Estonia, France, Italy, Liechtenstein, Malta, Monaco and Portugal
Objectives	<p>To strengthen the implementation of local and regional democracy in Morocco by enhancing the capacities of local elected representatives and their associations;</p> <p>To enhance the capacities of local and regional associations to defend their interests, particularly in the regionalisation process;</p> <p>To promote and raise awareness of European standards of local and regional democracy.</p>
Main activities	<p>Study visit during the 32nd session of the Congress (Strasbourg, 27 to 30 March 2017);</p> <p>Study on the role of national associations of local and regional authorities in the national consultation mechanisms in Europe, with a view to the development of such a mechanism in Morocco and Tunisia;</p> <p>Study on the powers and responsibilities of local and regional authorities in Morocco and their training resources, with a view to the setting up of a training mechanism for local and regional elected representatives (future project);</p> <p>Study on the modalities of the organisation of study visits for local and regional elected representatives;</p> <p>Arrangements between the Regions of Morocco (ARM) and Région Grand Est for the organisation of a study visit of Moroccan elected representatives and administrators;</p> <p>International conference “Building an inclusive community: integrating migrants, fighting violent extremism, involving citizens”, organised with the city of Rabat (Rabat, 20 - 22 November 2017);</p> <p>Parliamentary colloquy “Regionalisation in Morocco: opportunities and challenges for consolidating decentralised governance”, organised with the Moroccan Parliament (Rabat, 28 - 29 November 2017);</p> <p>Meeting with a Moroccan delegation, composed of representatives of the Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, of the DGCL (General Directorate of Local Authorities), of the Moroccan Ministry of the Interior, as well as the Consul General and Vice-Consul of Morocco. Renewed commitment to submit in 2018 an official letter of request of the Partner for Local Democracy status, which will offer a delegation of Moroccan elected representatives the opportunity to participate in the Congress and to strengthen local and regional democracy.</p>

⁵⁷ <https://rm.coe.int/16802f7c60>

⁵⁸ A follow-up to this project under the framework of the Neighbourhood Partnership with Morocco 2018-2021 (which is going to be approved by the Committee of Ministers on 21 March 2018) was submitted for funding in October 2017 and is still pending.

TUNISIA	Neighbourhood Partnership with Tunisia 2015-2017 ⁵⁹
Project title	Promoting local and regional democracy in Tunisia
Dates	January 2016 – December 2017 ⁶⁰
Budget	99 358 €
Funding	Norway, Estonia, France, Italy, Monaco and Portugal
Objectives	<p>To improve and strengthen the implementation of local democracy in Tunisia;</p> <p>To support the implementation of democratic processes at local level, including the observation of local elections;</p> <p>To promote and raise awareness of European standards of local democracy, particularly the European Charter of Local Self-Government.</p>
Main activities	<p>Revision of the Charter of the National Federation of Tunisian Towns and preparation of a manual of internal procedures and rules (in progress);</p> <p>Study visit during the 32nd session of the Congress (Strasbourg, 27-30 March 2017);</p> <p>Study on the role of national associations of local and regional authorities in national consultation mechanisms in Europe, with a view to the development of such a mechanism in Morocco and Tunisia;</p> <p>International conference on "Women in local politics" (Tunis, 26-27 September 2017) intended to promote the exchange of knowledge and better practices regarding the role of women in politics at local level and the building of their capacities, with a view to the next local elections;</p> <p>Legislative assistance towards the draft Code of local authorities submitted to the Assembly of the Representatives of the People and a workshop organised with the participation of Tunisian and Congress experts to exchange on and debate the draft code, as well as decentralisation;</p> <p>Expert support to the drafting of eight implementation decrees of the Code of Local authorities (in progress);</p> <p>Training of Trainers of the Training and Support Centre for Decentralisation in conflict management and political mediation (Tunis, 16-18 November 2017);</p> <p>Training for the staff of the National Federation of Tunisian Towns (FNVT) in project management (Tunis, November 2017).</p>

⁵⁹ <https://rm.coe.int/16802f7dfa>

⁶⁰ A follow-up to this project under the framework of the Neighbourhood Partnership with Tunisia 2018-2021 (which is going to be approved by the Committee of Ministers on 21 March 2018) was submitted for funding in October 2017 and is still pending.