

**34th Session – Strasbourg, France, 27-28 March 2018**

## Presentation by Zdenek BROZ (Czech Republic, L, ECR)

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### **Report “ Local democracy in Andorra”**

**Strasbourg, France, 28 March 2018**

Dear colleagues,

It is a pleasure for me to present to you today with my co-rapporteur Ms Gaye Doganoglu a report and draft recommendation on local democracy in Andorra. They were approved by the Monitoring Committee at its meeting on 14 February 2018.

And I am honoured that Mr Antoni Martí Petit, Head of Government of the Principality of Andorra, is present here today.

The monitoring visit to the Principality of Andorra took place from 25 to 26 April 2017. We visited the capital city Andorra la Vella and the parishes of Canillo and Encamp.

Our delegation was composed of Gaye Doganoglu from Turkey and myself in our capacity of rapporteurs on local democracy as well as Tania Groppi as expert.

It was the very first monitoring visit to the Principality of Andorra since it ratified the Charter in 2011. So we were particularly pleased to “discover” this country from the point of view of local democracy.

This was a very informative visit that allowed us to observe how local self-government functions in a country with a relatively small surface area. In fact, Andorra has 7 municipalities, or parishes, on the area of 468 square kilometres.

We anticipated some effects of this territorial factor on the organisation of local democracy in Andorra and we were very pleased to note that it had a positive impact on the application of some provisions of the Charter, in particular on consultations with local authorities.

We met the representatives of local authorities, notably the Mayors of Andorra la Vella, Canillo and Encamp. We received a very warm welcome from the National Delegation of Andorra to the Congress which provided us with extensive information.

We had high level meetings with the Head of Government, who is attending our session, and the Minister of Finance that allowed us to hold an open and fruitful political exchange of views about the functioning of local democracy in the country.

We also met Vice-President of the General Council (Parliament), President of the Constitutional Court and Ombudsman.

I would like to thank, on behalf of our monitoring delegation, the Andorran national delegation to the Congress, the Permanent Representative of Andorra to the Council of Europe and all our Andorran colleagues who contributed to the excellent organization of the visit and for their very valuable contribution during the consultation procedure on the draft report.

Overall, we have had a very positive impression about the situation of local democracy in Andorra and we consider that in some areas the implementation of the Charter by the Principality is exemplary.

Without doubt, historical reasons have played their important role in the success story of this country.

Andorra was in fact born as a “federation” of six parishes. A parish, as its name indicates, was originally a religious constituency that gradually transformed into a political-territorial district.

The governing and administrative bodies of parishes, named *Comuns*, have increasingly delegated its competences to the first parliament of Andorra - the Council of the Land. The Council of the Land, created yet in 15th century, was composed, until 1866 by the mayor and by the deputy mayor, incoming and outgoing, of each of the six Andorran parishes.

From 1866 onwards, the Council of the Land was replaced by the General Council, composed of four representatives of each one of the six Parishes, named consellers generals.

Today’s seven parishes are represented in modern Andorran parliament by fourteen councillors (half of the total number of MPs) who are elected in territorial constituencies.

Local authorities are allowed to introduce legislative initiatives in the parliament. They play an important role in the constitutional revision procedures and in the enactment of so-called qualified laws. Qualified laws are laws that can only be adopted if there is a favourable vote of the absolute majority of parliamentarians elected within the parish constituency. Among qualified laws are the law on the electoral system and the referendum, the law on the *Comuns’* competences and the transfer of resources.

My co-rapporteur Gaye DOGANOGLU will provide you with other pieces of information.

Thank you for your attention.