

**48th SESSION**  
**CG(2025)48-PV-01am**

**MINUTES**

**First Sitting**

<b>Tuesday 25 March 2025</b>	
<b>Plenary Sitting</b>	
10.30 – 13.00, Hemicycle	
<b>1.</b>	<p><b>Opening of the 48th Session of the Congress by the President</b></p> <p>Marc COOLS, President of the Congress, declared the 48th Session of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe open at 10.33.</p> <p><i>The European and Ukrainian anthems were played.</i></p> <p>A minute's silence was held for former members Yasemen CELIK, Llibert CUATRECASAS, Fabio PELLEGRINI and Frantisek DOHNAL who have passed away.</p> <p>The President welcomed representatives of the democratic forces of Belarus who were attending the Congress for the first time.</p>
<b>2.</b>	<p><b>Test vote</b></p> <p>The President reminded members of the procedure for voting and requesting to speak.</p> <p>A test vote took place.</p>
<b>3.</b>	<p><b>Verification of new members' credentials</b></p> <p>The co-rapporteurs, Martine DIESCHBURG-NICKELS, Luxembourg (L, ILDG), and Andrew BOFF, United Kingdom (R, ECR), presented document CG(2025)48-04.</p> <p>The Congress proceeded to vote on the draft resolution in CG(2025)48-02.</p> <p>The draft resolution in document CG(2025)48-02 was adopted.</p>
<b>4.</b>	<p><b>Adoption of the agenda of the 48th Session</b></p> <p>The agenda in document CG(2025)48-OJ was adopted.</p>
<b>5.</b>	<p><b>Adoption of the draft minutes of the last sitting of the 47th Session (17 October 2024)</b></p> <p>The minutes of the last sitting of the 47th Session, on 17 October 2024, in document CG(2024)47-PV-03, were adopted.</p>
<b>6.</b>	<p><b>Adoption of the composition of Congress committees</b></p> <p>The composition of Congress committees in document CG(2025)48-03 was adopted.</p>
<b>7.</b>	<p><b>Statement by Bjørn BERGE, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe</b></p>

	<p>The President welcomed Bjørn BERGE, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, and invited him to make a statement.</p> <p>Bjørn BERGE made a statement.</p> <p>He responded to questions from: Harald SONDEREGGER, Austria (R, EPP/CCE); Joris BENGEOVOORD, Netherlands (L, SOC/G/PD); Martine DIESCHBURG-NICKELS, Luxembourg (L, ILDG); Andrew BOFF, United Kingdom (R, ECR); Thibaut GUIGNARD, France (L, EPP/CCE); Melanie LEPOULTIER, France (L, ILDG); Michael WEILCH, Austria (youth delegate); Bram GIERKINK, Netherlands (youth delegate).</p> <p>The President thanked Bjørn BERGE.</p>
<b>8.</b>	<p><b>Congress budget for 2026-2027</b></p> <p>The rapporteur, Konstantinos KOUKAS, Greece (L, EPP/CCE), presented the report contained in document CG(2025)48-09.</p> <p>The debate was opened.</p> <p><i>Speakers:</i> Jewel MIAH, United Kingdom (L, SOC/G/PD); Michael WEILCH, Austria (youth delegate); Thibaut GUIGNARD, France (L, EPP/CCE).</p> <p>Konstantinos KOUKAS replied to the debate.</p> <p>The debate was closed.</p> <p>The Congress proceeded to vote on the draft recommendation in document CG(2025)48-09.</p> <p>The draft recommendation was adopted.</p>
<b>9.</b>	<p><b>Statement by Michael O'FLAHERTY, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights</b></p> <p>The President welcomed Michael O'FLAHERTY, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, and invited him to make a statement.</p> <p>Michael O'FLAHERTY made a statement.</p> <p>He responded to questions from: Klas Anders KNAPE, Sweden (L, EPP/CCE); Igor STOJANOVIC, Bosnia and Herzegovina (R, SOC/G/PD); James MOLONEY, Ireland (L, ILDG); Andrew BOFF, United Kingdom (R, ECR); Gudrun MOSLER-TOERNSTROEM, Austria (L, SOC/G/PD); Enes HOCAOGULLARI, Türkiye (youth delegate); Sevdia UGREKHELIDZE, Georgia (L, EPP/CCE); Melanie LEPOULTIER, France (L, ILDG); Konstantinos KOUKAS, Greece (L, EPP/CCE); Christos PARMAKKIS, Cyprus (youth delegate).</p> <p>The Vice-President thanked Michael O'FLAHERTY.</p>
	<p><i>Cecilia DALMAN EEK, Vice-President of the Congress, took the Chair at 12.26.</i></p>
<b>10.</b>	<p><b>Suspension of the sitting</b></p> <p><i>The sitting was suspended at 12.46.</i></p>