

**32nd SESSION****Open data for better public services**Resolution 417 (2017)<sup>1</sup>

1. The rapid and ongoing rise in the quality and quantity of digital data and information managed and generated by local authorities is providing valuable new opportunities for them to improve the quality of local life by sharing the data and releasing it into the public domain. An increasing number of cities are demonstrating that there is huge untapped potential in this data for NGOs and interest groups, when it is released into the public domain in a reusable format.
2. In many sectors, including transport, public health, use of cultural facilities, environment quality and energy use, public authority data sets are beginning to be used by civil society groups, often working in partnership with the local authority, to develop new tools and applications for promoting good governance in towns and cities. The benefits can be improved governance, improved quality of life and cities that are ecological and smart.
3. Open data offers greater transparency and not only provides citizens with the information to understand what their local governments do but also empowers them to contribute to the decisions-making process of their local governments. It can lead to more participation in policy making, to achieve more intelligent and tailored and responsive policies and more accountability.
4. The reuse of public sector information can also stimulate social and economic growth by enabling third parties to create innovative products and services. Recent estimates have put the potential benefits of open data at more than 1% of global GDP.
5. In the light of the above, the Congress:
  - a. Bearing in mind :
    - i. Congress Resolution 290 and Recommendation 274 (2009) on E-democracy: opportunities and risks for local authorities;
    - ii. Congress Resolution 389 (2015) on New forms of local governance;
    - iii. the Convention on Access to Official Documents (CETS No. 205);
    - iv. the Additional Protocol to the European Charter of Local Self-Government on the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority (CETS No.207);
  - b. Convinced that open data is and will be a strong engine for improving local governance, with the power to transform cities into more open, democratic, transparent spaces;
  - c. Convinced that the use of open data by cities in the future is necessary in order to keep up with the new generation of computer literate young;
  - d. Aware of the challenges that remain in providing access to open data in easy to use formats;

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<sup>1</sup> Debated and adopted by the Congress on 30 March 2017, 3rd sitting (see Document [CG32\(2017\)15](#), rapporteur: Manuela BORA, Italy (R, SOC))

- e. Conscious of the need to respect privacy and data protection laws and policies.
- 6. Calls upon local authorities in the Council of Europe member States to:
  - a. Develop strategies to make local authority information datasets open to citizens in machine readable formats for their citizens to reuse, including on mobile devices;
  - b. Take measures to ensure that the entire population in a city have access to open data, benefit from and actively participate in open data initiatives, dialogues between government and citizens, and public facilities delivered by open data;
  - c. Encourage citizens to make use of open data by publishing information, organising public meetings and programmes to stimulate the use of open data to provide societal value;
  - d. Create partnerships with civil society groups and other organisations that can help to provide training and capacity building in the re-use of open data and the organisation of open data activities;
  - e. Consult citizens and civil society for input about how to make the data more responsive to their interests and concerns through public events, workshops and consultations, in order to understand which data should be provided and generated;
  - f. Ensure that data protection and privacy laws and policies are strictly adhered to when data is made available to the public.
- 7. Commits itself to:
  - a. Supporting and encouraging local authorities to re-use public information and make datasets available to the public in order to improve their public service delivery, strengthen local democracy and stimulate social, cultural and environmental initiatives;
  - b. Encouraging cities to go beyond the release of open data sets towards making local data infrastructures more responsive to the interests, needs and concerns of their citizens;
  - c. Assisting cities to gather feedback from citizens, civil society groups and other stakeholders through organising public events, workshops and consultation to understand the interests of the different user groups and to inform data publication priorities;
- 8. Asks national associations of local and regional authorities to encourage their national governments to sign and ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Access to Official Documents (CETS No. 205) and the Additional Protocol to the European Charter of Local Self-Government on the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority (CETS No.207) if they have not yet done so.