

# THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

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## Resolution 338 (2012)<sup>1</sup> Local elections in Bulgaria (23 October 2011)

1. Free and fair elections, at national but also at territorial level, constitute an integral part of democratic processes in Council of Europe member states.

2. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe welcomes the fact that, since its accession to the Council of Europe in 1992, Bulgaria has steadily been strengthening local and regional democracy, showing “a marked improvement in the area of local democracy” over the last 20 years.<sup>2</sup>

3. The Congress also acknowledges the legislative reform undertaken by the Bulgarian authorities so that almost all aspects of public administration are now covered by legislation of high quality in terms of its clarity and of guaranteeing the fundamental rights of citizens and local authorities.<sup>3</sup>

4. The Congress takes note of Recommendation 318 (2012) on local elections in Bulgaria, regarding the findings of the mission to observe the local elections in Bulgaria on 23 October 2011.

5. Given the above, and in conformity with its Resolution 306 (2010) “Observation of local and regional elections – strategy and rules of the Congress”, the Congress:

*a.* asks, in particular, its Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States of the

European Charter of Local Self-Government (Monitoring Committee) to take note of the above-mentioned recommendation and to take it into account in the framework of its work programmes to assess the progress made by the country in matters of local democracy and the honouring of commitments to the European Charter of Local Self-Government;

*b.* invites its Monitoring Committee, notably, to follow the implementation of the decision by the Constitutional Court of Bulgaria released on 4 May 2011, with regard to the reduced number of municipal councillors and the question of direct election of mayors;

*c.* decides to examine, in co-ordination with the relevant Council of Europe bodies, ways of supporting Bulgaria in pursuing reforms for the further improvement of election administration and the strengthening of territorial democracy.

6. It expresses its will and availability to participate in activities aimed at strengthening local democracy as well as electoral processes in Bulgaria, through continued political dialogue with the authorities, in particular in respect of the ongoing decentralisation process, and through intensified co-operation with the local self-government associations.

7. The Congress, in partnership with other Council of Europe actors in this field, considers developing strategies and programmes to raise awareness for democratic electoral processes among vulnerable groups, in particular the Roma population, with the aim of strengthening a cohesive and inclusive society.

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1. Debated and adopted by the Congress on 20 March 2012, 1st sitting (see document CG(22)5 explanatory memorandum), Rapporteurs: M. Juhkami, Estonia (L, EPP/CD).

2. CG(21)14 of 21 September 2011: Report on local and regional democracy in Bulgaria, § 170.

3. *Idem*, § 171.