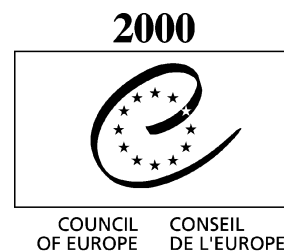


CONGRES DES POUVOIRS LOCAUX ET REGIONAUX DE L'EUROPE
CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES OF EUROPE



SEVENTH SESSION

(Strasbourg, 23-25 May 2000)

Resolution 92 (2000)¹
on the participation of foreign residents
in local public life

1. Debated by the Congress and adopted on 24 May 2000, Second Sitting (see doc. CG (7) 5 draft resolution presented by Mrs H. Lund, rapporteur).

The Congress,

1. Recalling in particular:
 - the Council of Europe Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level, open for signature by member states since February 1992;
 - the Council of Europe's European Convention on Human Rights and its additional protocols;
2. Considering the results of the conference: What Participation by Foreign Residents in Public Life at Local Level?, held in Strasbourg on 5 and 6 November 1999 and the appeal adopted by the participants at the end of that conference;
3. Thanking the City of Strasbourg and its *Conseil consultatif des étrangers (CCE)* (Foreigners' Advisory Council) for having organised the conference in conjunction with the CLRAE;
4. Taking note of Mrs Lund's report and Recommendation 76 (2000) on the participation of foreign residents in public life at local level;
5. Underlining the topicality of this issue in many European countries;
6. Taking into account particularly point 8 of the Strasbourg Appeal, requesting the Congress, in partnership with local authorities, to deepen mutual understanding of these various forms of participation for the benefit of all inhabitants;
7. Convinced that democratic principles require that foreign residents who have legally settled in European states on a long-term basis should not be excluded from political life at local level, whatever their country of origin;
8. Convinced that enjoyment of this right is essential for social cohesion in towns, lasting tolerance and peace in our societies;

Calls upon European local and regional authorities to:

9. Work towards the acceptance of foreign residents as residents-citizens actively contributing to the life of the community and participating in public life;
10. Give active support to foreign residents' associations working towards integrating foreigners, fighting all forms of intolerance and acting as the preferred intermediaries between local and regional decision-making bodies and these residents;
11. Improve the means of informing foreign residents of their rights and duties under the national legislation in force, and of the opportunities open to them as regards the right of association, freedom of expression, participation and consultation;
12. Draw up, in co-operation with the communities concerned, charters on the guiding principles to be followed in formulating a policy on foreign residents in towns;
13. Enable foreign residents to vote in referendums and local consultation procedures;

14. Set up advisory bodies representing foreign residents at local and/or regional level, drawing inspiration from examples already existing in many other European towns and regions;
15. Rather than confine these bodies to a purely advisory role, empower them to take the initiative and make proposals so that they may refer subjects they feel strongly about, and which affect the community of foreign residents, to municipal councils;
16. Provide these bodies with sufficient staff, an operating budget and structures that will enable them to fulfil their role in preparing the background against which decisions will be taken in all areas of urban policy affecting foreign residents;
17. Give male and female politicians of foreign extraction a higher profile in order to further acceptance by the public at large of the role and place of foreign residents in community life;
18. Consider the possibility of also appointing qualified persons, to act as advisers and mediators for foreign residents, in the public services for which towns and regions are responsible;
19. Encourage, whenever possible, the integration of members of communities of foreign residents in local and regional government bodies;
20. Train local and regional government staff to deal with foreign residents, give them information and advice and help them with administrative formalities;
21. Help foreign residents to acquire the linguistic and other skills they need to participate fully in the economic, social and cultural life of the community;
22. Share experiences with other European towns and regions and increase public awareness of how important it is for residents-citizens, whatever their country of origin, to participate fully in local and regional democracy;
23. Pursue this debate in the different political parties and defend the principle that there can be no sustainable local democracy without the full participation of all members of the community;
24. Work towards a generous and courageous overall policy of integration in all areas of social, economic and cultural life with due regard to the equal dignity of all citizens;

Invites the Committee of the Regions of the European Union to:

25. Distribute to all its members the conclusions of the Strasbourg Conference and the appeal adopted by the participants;
26. Use all its influence to ensure that measures are adopted in all European Union member states to remove discrimination between European Union citizens and non-Union citizens as regards civil and political rights, thus respecting the opinion expressed by the European Parliament a resolution adopted in 1997;

Recommends that the Bureau of the Congress instruct the competent CLRAE committees to:

27. Plan a follow-up to the Strasbourg Conference, and in particular foster a broad exchange of experience between European towns and regions in this field in co-operation with the Council of Europe organs concerned and other organisations active in this field;

28. Arrange in due time for another conference to review that exchange of experience and encourage European local and regional authorities to take initiatives, in conformity with national legislation, to move public opinion forward and develop good practices on the recognition of residents-citizens' rights in municipalities where they live, whatever their country of origin.