

THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

Resolution 298 (2010)¹ After Copenhagen, cities and regions take up the challenge

1. The 15th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Copenhagen (Denmark) from 7 to 18 December 2009, brought together representatives of 193 governments and a very large number of local and regional authorities and non-governmental organisations from all over the world, to prepare follow-up action to the Kyoto Protocol.

2. The conference was emblematic in terms of the mobilisation to which it gave rise and the expectations which it generated among the public, thus marking a historic turning point in the world's response to the challenge of global warming.

3. Unfortunately, the political agreement concluded is inadequate in view of all that is now at stake, not just ecologically, but also economically, and in terms of equity and human rights.

4. While deeply regretting this lack of results, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe hopes that this agreement nevertheless represents a first step towards the development of the content of a new binding treaty which it is imperative to adopt at the next Conference of the Parties, to be held in Mexico from 29 November to 10 December 2010.

5. Numerous representatives of the world's local and regional authorities were present in Copenhagen, some of them as members of their national delegations, as advocated in Congress Recommendation 271 (2009) and Resolution 288 (2009) on the global challenges of climate change: local responses.

6. The Congress notes with satisfaction their determination – perhaps even greater since Copenhagen – to take action on the climate and their mobilisation through the Local Government Climate Roadmap as well as through their respective networks and associations.

7. The Congress was also represented in Copenhagen and made a strong commitment, particularly alongside the Committee of the Regions of the European Union, to

obtaining full recognition of the role of local and regional authorities in a new global agreement.

8. It welcomes the official recognition by certain countries and by the European Union of the vital role that they are having to play both in mitigating the effects of climate change and in adapting their territories.

9. The Congress takes the view that action by local and sub-national governments to rise to the energy and climatic challenges is all the more vital because states did not take any practical decisions. It would like cities and regions to continue to show that they are the drivers of major changes in their own areas.

10. It therefore calls for this commitment to be pursued and for effective participation throughout the negotiation process in 2010 and beyond. For its part, it will work in the same direction and support the activities of international associations and networks of local and regional authorities in the diplomatic process relating to the climate.

11. In the light of the above, the Congress calls on the local and regional authorities of Council of Europe member and observer states to:

a. commit themselves in the sphere of climate change and set themselves ambitious targets, without waiting for government commitment;

b. at the same time, start a dialogue with their respective governments in order to enhance each nation's proposals and encourage them to enter into clear and ambitious commitments at European and global level;

c. ask their respective national governments to:

i. recognise fully the essential role of local and regional authorities in the combating of climate change;

ii. include representatives of local and regional authorities in the delegations to be formed for the next Conference of the Parties (Mexico, December 2010), and throughout the process of negotiation of a new agreement.

12. The Congress instructs its Committee on Sustainable Development to continue to monitor climate and energy issues and, in particular, to study the links between human rights and climate change, as the least well-off citizens are often the most exposed to the risks.

1. Debated and adopted by the Congress on 18 March 2010, 2nd Sitting (see Document CG(18)4, explanatory memorandum), rapporteur: D. Suica, Croatia (L, EPP/CD).