

ACTIVITY REPORT

(December 2015 to mid-April 2016)



Communication of the Secretary General of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities

At the 1253th meeting of the Minister's Deputies
13 April 2016

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Communication by Andreas Kiefer, Secretary General of the Congress

1253th Meeting of the Ministers' Deputies, Wednesday, 13 April 2016

I am very happy to be here once again for our twice-yearly exchange of views which is a very good opportunity to provide delegates with an update on Congress activities and is complementary to your annual exchange with the President of the Congress.

As usual, my oral communication to you is complemented by a written activity report which covers the period from December 2015 to April 2016, since my last communication to you (1 December 2015).

March 2016 session

The overall theme chosen for the sessions in 2016 is “Ethics and transparency at local and regional levels”.

Corruption is a major threat to democratic stability. Local and regional administrations manage substantial funds and take decisions which have material and practical consequences for individuals and companies. Citizens want more transparency with regard to how public money is spent and they are ready to pay taxes when they know that the money is well spent.

The Congress adopted a new approach several years ago which entails not only adopting statutory texts such as recommendations to the Committee of Ministers but also offering concrete and practical contributions to the work of the Council of Europe in its work to address current challenges. The March session, for example, dedicated a lot of attention to the integration of migrants and refugees, the fight against radicalisation, the promotion of intercultural and interreligious activities and the fight against trafficking of human beings.

Monitoring of local and regional democracy

The session adopted the first ever monitoring report and recommendation on the situation of local and regional democracy in France in the presence of the French Minister in charge of issues concerning local authorities who explained the reasons behind the territorial reform of the country. A report and recommendation were also adopted on the situation in Slovakia.

A report on the observation of elections on 25 October 2015 in Ukraine was adopted and a report on a post-election fact-finding mission in Albania was presented.

The Congress is ready to observe local elections if member States send an official invitation in this respect at least sixty days before election day.

Members also held a debate on experiences with “Post Monitoring Dialogue”, a process introduced by the Congress in 2014, with Ministers from Armenia, Georgia and Ukraine three of the first countries to undergo this process in co-operation with the Congress.

Some 10 monitoring visits, 2 or 3 fact findings and 4 observations of local elections are planned in 2016 and road maps for the implementation of the Congress’ recommendations should be signed with Armenia and Moldova.

Youth delegates

The involvement of youth has become almost “business as usual” since the October 2014 session. In 2016, for the first time, the Congress invited a group of youth delegates to participate in both March and October sessions in order to provide a more enhanced participation. Forty young delegates from 40 national delegations participated in committee meetings, plenary and chamber sittings in which they took the floor during debates and presented proposals.

External relations

Since the end of 2015 a new impetus has been given to the co-operation of the Congress with the Committee of the Regions (CoR). High level meetings “3+3” (The President and Presidents of the Chambers on behalf of the Congress and the President, Vice-President and President of the CIVEX Committee on behalf of the CoR) will be held once a year. In the first such “3+3” meeting held in February 2016, the two institutions decided to organise by the end of 2016 or in early 2017 a joint conference on preventing and fighting corruption. Another decision taken at this meeting was to invite the Congress to the CoR “Task Force Ukraine” meetings. Furthermore, the Presidents will regularly address the plenary session of the other organisation.

There is also regular contact between the Secretary Generals of the Congress and the CoR, and the Congress invites the CoR to participate in election observation missions and presents monitoring reports to the CIVEX committee.

Thematic activities

The Alliance of Cities and Regions for Roma Inclusion recently has been incorporated into the administrative structure of the Special Representative of the Council of Europe Secretary General support team. The Congress will, however, continue to support the Alliance politically and its activities financially.

The Congress continues to implement a part of the local and regional dimension of the Council of Europe Action plans for several countries (Albania, Armenia, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine) and the EU-funded Programmatic Co-operation Framework programme.

A Summit of Mayors against Radicalisation will be organised in co-operation with the European Forum for Urban Security (EFUS) in Rotterdam on 9 November 2016 as a follow up to the International Conference of Local Authorities on the Prevention of Radicalisation Leading to Violent Extremism held in Aarhus, Denmark on 18 November 2015.. This summit should be the launch pad for an Alliance of Cities against radicalisation.

A Social Integration Summit will be held in Istanbul on 17-18 May 2016 with the active contribution of the Congress. The President of the Congress will speak at the opening session and Vice-Presidents and rapporteurs working on issues related to the integration of refugees, Roma and people with disabilities will take the floor as speakers.

Renewal session in October 2016

Congress delegates are appointed for a period of four years. At the session following the expiration of that period, all delegations must be renewed. The next renewal will be this autumn at the Congress' 31st session which takes place from 19 to 21 October.

Later this month all Permanent Representations will therefore receive a letter from Secretary General Jagland to be forwarded to their respective Ministers of Foreign Affairs. This letter invites member States to start the process of consultation of all stake-holders mentioned in their official procedure leading to the appointment of their new delegations for the October 2016-October 2020 mandate. The letter also contains all the forms that need to be filled in and detailed information on drawing up a delegation (criteria, deadlines, procedures, etc).

I will also write to the national associations of local and regional authorities who are involved in the process of appointing national delegations to inform them of the steps they need to take.

In order to ensure the smoothest possible renewal for all delegations we will ask member States to send us their nominations if possible before the summer and definitely well before the final deadline of 5 September 2016 so that we have enough time if changes need to be made.

During the October Session members will discuss and adopt the Congress priorities for 2017-2020. These priorities will focus in particular on statutory activities such as monitoring the European Charter for Local Self-Government and observation of local and regional elections as well as the current

challenges to communities, aiming at sharing its the experiences and solutions of its members. And, we will do this in synch with the priorities of the Organisation.

I would like to conclude this presentation by recalling that maintaining a regular dialogue with member states of the Council of Europe is a priority for the Congress.

From what we can see during our monitoring and post-monitoring processes, there is a growing desire of governments to establish such dialogue and we consider this as a very positive sign of the importance that member states attach to the good health of their local and regional democracy.

For its sessions in 2016, the Congress has chosen the general theme of “ethics and transparency at local and regional level” because it considers corruption as a major threat to democratic stability. But other crisis and threats are challenging European societies and their local and regional communities too – crisis of migrants and refugees, terrorism and radicalisation, racism and violent extremism, economic and financial crisis, war at European borders and within Europe. The Congress is working to help local and regional communities overcome these crisis.

The current report, which covers the period from December 2015 to April 2016, gives an overview of its activities and the concrete work fulfilled by its bodies and members in the field.

I. POLITICAL AGENDA

A. PRESIDENCY OF THE CONGRESS



Since October 2014, the President of the Congress is [Jean-Claude Frécon](#), (France, SOC). The first Vice-President of the Congress is [Gudrun Mosler-Törnström](#) (Austria, SOC), President of the Chamber of Regions and the second Vice-President is [Anders Knappe](#) (Sweden, EPP/CCE), President of the Chamber of Local Authorities.

Photo: The President of the Congress and the President of Albania, Bujar Nishani, on 22 March 2016

Participation of the Congress President to the 115th plenary session of the Committee of the Regions (Brussels, 4 December 2015)

This was the first time a President of the Congress has addressed the plenary session of the Committee of the Regions. Given that the two institutions celebrated their 20th anniversary in 2014, the Congress President felt that it was essential to assess the co-operation between them, in order to strengthen and deepen it. He highlighted examples of existing co-operation in the field of observing local and regional elections or in co-operation projects in the Eastern Partnership countries. He took the example of Ukraine where the Congress was heavily involved in the current reforms and for which the Committee of the Regions had set up a specific task force to show that identifying common priorities would enable to move from co-operation to joint action.

Statement by the President on the occasion of the International Human Rights Day (Strasbourg, 10 December 2015)

The President of the Congress stated that it was not only a commemoration, but it was also a stark reminder for all, because humanity is still far from the ideal it set for itself in 1948. He addressed in particular the difficult nature of the year 2015, underlining that the economic crisis, the refugee crisis, and terrorist threats are challenges which endanger human rights and fundamental freedoms. He also recalled that the work of the Congress for the coming years will focus on the implementation of concrete actions of awareness-raising and support for local elected representatives, in light of the goals set by the Graz Declaration, adopted in May 2015 after the International Forum 'focusing on human rights' held by the Congress, the City of Graz and the Land of Styria.

Statement by the President on the occasion of the International Migrants Day (Strasbourg, 18 December 2015)

The President of the Congress stated that the issue of migrants is closely linked to the responsibilities of local authorities, which are directly affected by migratory flows. He underlined that local and regional authorities are first in line when it comes to catering and providing accommodation for migrants and their families. As many of the texts adopted over the past fifteen years have shown, the Congress is convinced that the integration of migrants depends, first and foremost, on their participation in local affairs and on their access to employment, education and all public services on an equal footing with the remainder of the population.

Exchange of views between Congress President and the President of Bulgaria (Strasbourg, 26 January 2016)

The role of municipalities and regions in ensuring cohesion and stability in Europe was at the heart of the exchange of views between Congress President and the President of Bulgaria, Rosen Plevneliev, during the part-session of the Parliamentary Assembly. Paying tribute to the work carried out by the local and regional authorities in the Congress, the Bulgarian President, who was the former Minister for Regional Development and Public Works, underlined how much the whole Balkan region had stabilised thanks to the development of regions and to cross-border co-operation.

Meeting between Congress President and the Captains Regent of San Marino (Strasbourg, 28 January 2016)

During his meeting with the Captains Regent of San Marino, Lorella Stefanelli and Nicola Renzi, in the sideline of the session of the Parliamentary Assembly, the President of the Congress recalled that the signature by San Marino of the European Charter of Local Self-Government had paved the way from the end of 2013 onwards for the application of the Charter to the whole of Europe. San Marino had been the 47th state to sign the Charter, putting the last component in place for the creation of a single legal space for local self-government in Europe. He pointed out that the Congress now is to pursue its political dialogue with governments to achieve the ratification of all the provisions of the Charter so that 100% of the Charter covers 100% of European territory.

First meeting of High Level Group Congress / Committee of the Regions (Brussels, 9 February 2016)

The High Level Group “3+3” of the Congress and the EU Committee of the Regions (CoR) met for the first time, under the presidency of Markku Markkula and Jean-Claude Frécon, respectively Chairmen of the Committee of the Regions and the Congress (see VI. Institutional Co-operation)

Statement by the President on the occasion of the International Women’s Day (Strasbourg, 8 March 2016)

Jean-Claude Frécon reaffirmed the commitment of the Congress to balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making. He recalled that the Congress ensures that women make up at least 30% of members in all its national delegations since 2008. In implementing the local dimension of the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy (2014-2017), the Congress is currently examining the legal framework and the existing policies in this area and studying ways of improving women’s participation in political life in Europe. He has also drawn up standard-setting texts for local and regional authorities concerning efforts to combat violence against women and increasing poverty among women.

Statement on the Bulgaria’s ratification of the Additional Protocol on the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority (Strasbourg, 14 March 2016)

Jean-Claude Frécon welcomed Bulgaria’s ratification of the Additional Protocol, which gives the citizens of member states the right “to help determine or influence a local authority’s exercise of power and responsibilities”. He emphasised that for the Congress this was a “key aspect of the proper functioning of local democracy.” This ratification coincided with Bulgaria’s Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. President Frécon pointed out that the

Chairmanships of the Committee of Ministers were an opportunity for the Congress, and for the Council of Europe as a whole, to develop links and dialogue with the authorities of member states.

Exchange of views between Congress President and the President of Albania (Strasbourg, 22 March 2016)

Congress President met the President of Albania, Bujar Nishani, who was visiting the Council of Europe. The Albanian President referred to the excellent and long-standing co-operation between the Congress and Albania, emphasising that “the Congress is a first-class partner for a young democracy such as Albania, which it is helping to take shape on the basis of values shared by all European countries.” He told the Congress President about the reform of local authorities and the process of devolution currently taking place in his country, expressing the hope that the Congress would remain close to Albania and continue to provide its assistance, advice and expertise to Albanian local elected representatives to enable them to fulfil their role for their citizens in the best possible way.

B. CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS



Photo: The President of the Congress and the President of Bulgaria, Rosen Plevneliev, on 26 January 2016

The Congress contributed actively to several events organised by the presidency of Bulgaria of the Committee of Ministers.

It notably organised a meeting of its bureau in Sofia. On this occasion, the President and the vice-president of the Congress held exchanges of views also with representatives of government and parliament, local and regional elected representatives as well as students (see II.B. Bureau)

In Strasbourg, the Congress President met the President of Bulgaria, Rosen Plevneliev, who visited the parliamentary Assembly, and Minister of Regional Development and Public Works of Bulgaria, Lilyana Pavlova, who held an exchange of views with the Congress members during the March 2016 session (see I. Political agenda and II. A. 30th Session of Congress)

Congress members and thematic rapporteurs also took part in manifestations held by the Presidency, in particular a High Level Conference to promote the new Council of Europe’s Strategy on the Rights of the Child 2016-2021 in Sofia, on 5-6 April 2016. (see V. Thematic activities)

In addition, the Secretary General of the Congress took part in an experts’ conference on “Good governance at local level – challenges and prospects” on 31 March 2016 in Sofia. On this occasion, he recalled that a democracy cannot thrive without good governance and he presented four recurring issues identified through the Congress monitoring of the European Charter of Local autonomy: an

unclear definition of the competences of local authorities, inadequate financial resources, the lack of consultation between local authorities and central authorities and the growing distance between governments and citizens.

II. ACTIVITIES OF THE CONGRESS BODIES

A. 30th SESSION OF THE CONGRESS



Photo: The hemicycle during the 30th session of the Congress

The two sessions of 2016 are placed under the general theme of “ethics and transparency at local and regional levels”. At its 30th Session from 22 to 24 March 2016, the Congress held a first debate on “Ethics and transparency at local and regional level: overview of the situation”, with the participation of representatives of the Italian national anti-corruption authority and Marin Mrčela, Chairman of the Council of Europe’s Group of States against Corruption (GRECO), and a second on “Making public procurement transparent”, with the participation of a Slovak mayor, Imrich Žigo, and Elizabeth David-Barrett, British academic specialising in corruption issues.

The Congress considered the issue of the integration of migrants in a plenary debate attended by Thorsten Klute, Secretary of State, Minister for Labour, Integration and Social Affairs of North Rhine Westphalia, Germany, Mustafa DüNDAR, Mayor of Osmangazi, district of Bursa, Turkey, and Gabriele C. Klug, Deputy Mayor of the City of Cologne, Germany, and in a debate held in the Chamber of Local Authorities on the theme “Internally displaced persons: the hidden face of the refugee crisis”, with notably the participation of Gert Westerveen, representative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and Andrzej Porawski, Executive Director of the Association of Polish Cities.

The agenda included two other thematic debates, the first on “Fighting human trafficking: the role of local authorities”, with the participation, inter alia, of Nicolas Le Coz, President of the Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings and Anthony Steen, Chairman of the Human Trafficking Foundation, and the second on “Rising to the challenges of creating intercultural societies at local level”, with Charles Saint-Prot, Director General of the Observatory of Geopolitical Studies of Paris, Alaa Murabit, the Founder of the Voice of Libyan Women and Mariam Inayat, Ambassador for the British Youth Council, United Kingdom.

In this latter debate, Leen Verbeek (Netherlands, SOC) introduced the Congress Strategy to Combat Radicalisation at Grassroots Level and the co-rapporteurs, Bert Bouwmeester, (Netherlands, ILDG)

and Josef Neumann, (Germany, SOC), presented a proposed “tool-kit” for use by elected representatives when organising intercultural and inter-religious activities. (See under V. Thematic activities)

Finally, the Congress held a thematic debate on the “Autonomy and borders in an evolving Europe” and a recommendation was also adopted.

As part of its monitoring of the implementation of the European Charter of Local Self-Government, the Congress considered a report on the situation of local and regional democracy in France, with the participation of Estelle Grelier, Secretary of State for Local and Regional Authorities at the Ministry of Regional Planning, Rural Affairs and Local Authorities, France, and another on the situation in the Slovak Republic.

It held a debate on post-monitoring dialogue with specific reference to Armenia, Georgia and Ukraine, with the participation of Vache Terteryan, First Deputy Minister of Territorial Administration and Emergency Situations, Armenia, Tengiz Shergelashvili, Deputy Minister of Regional Development and Infrastructure, Georgia, and Vyacheslav Nehoda, First Deputy Minister of Regional Development, Ukraine.

A recommendation on the observation of local elections in Ukraine (25 October 2015) was also adopted and the conclusions of the fact-finding visit to Albania from 24 to 26 February 2016 were presented.

Lilyana Pavlova, Minister of Regional Development and Public Works of Bulgaria, addressed the Congress on behalf of the Bulgarian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers.

She addressed the various areas of common concern of the Committee of Ministers and the Congress, in particular terrorism, refugee and migration crisis and the situation in Ukraine. She welcomed the Congress’s commitment to combat radicalisation and violent extremism and recalled that this fight is a top priority of the Committee of Ministers. She also stressed that the work of the Committee of Ministers can be strengthened by the contribution of local and regional authorities

The Congress medal was awarded to two honorary members: Knud Andersen, former Vice-President, Denmark and Ian Micallef, former President of the Chamber of Local authorities and President *ad interim* of the Congress, Malta.

Several social events and exhibitions were organised, notably by the Bulgarian Chairmanship and by the Vladimir region to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Federation of Russia’s accession to the Council of Europe.

In 2016, for the first time, the Congress has invited a group of youth delegates to participate in both March and October sessions. For the March session a group of 40 youth delegates from 40 member states came to Strasbourg. As well as contributing actively to debates and meetings, they held an exchange of views and a debriefing meeting with members.

They prepared joint contributions for the debates on integration of refugees and on mainstreaming of youth issues and put a question to the Representative of the Committee of Ministers as well as participating in the other wide-ranging debates on the agenda and in the activities of their respective national delegations.

B. BUREAU

10 and 11 December 2015

In the context of the Bulgarian chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers, the Bureau of the Congress met in Sofia. Items on the agenda included the situation in Ukraine, Poland and Azerbaijan as well as the priorities of the Congress (2017-2020).

In the margins of this meeting, the President of the Congress met the Minister of Regional Development and Public Works of Bulgaria, Lilyana Pavlova. Together with the Chair of the Congress’ Governance Committee, Marie Madeleine Mialot Muller (France, SOC), he met members of the

parliamentary committee on regional development, who underlined the progress in decentralising government in Bulgaria and the difficulties encountered by local authorities, in particular the distribution of financial resources, the imbalance between small and large municipalities and the additional financial burden caused by the reception of refugees and migrants in small towns and villages.

In addition, the Vice-President of the Congress, Gudrun Mosler-Törnström, and the Secretary General of the Congress held a debate with the students from the faculties of regional development, public administration and European studies of the University of Sofia. Presenting the work of the Congress and its unique role among European institutions, they focused on the monitoring by the Congress of the European Charter of Local Self-Government, its observation of local and regional elections and its activities in the field of preventing corruption at local and regional level.

8 February 2016

The Bureau held an exchange of views with Council of Europe Development Bank representative, Stephan Sellen, Deputy Director General for Loans and Social Development and Team Leader of the “Migrant and Refugee Fund”. In particular, the discussions focused on the new Migrant and Refugee Fund (MRF) set up by the Bank to finance action to improve the living conditions of migrants and refugees. To this end, the Bank is helping entry and transit countries to set up, modernise and operate reception and transit centres. The President of the Congress welcomed the establishment of the fund, while underlining the urgency of the situation. At the close of the discussion, the Bureau agreed to follow the development of the fund closely.

In addition, members of the Bureau discussed the 2017-2020 priorities as well as the preparation of the 30th Session (22-24 March 2016), the outcome of the 2015 edition of the European Local Democracy Week (12-18 October 2015), the Emperor Maximilian Prize 2016 awarded by the Land of Tyrol and the City of Innsbruck, and the Vaclav Havel Human Rights Prize 2016, awarded by the Parliamentary Assembly. They decided to examine twice a year a detailed report prepared by the Secretariat on the co-operation programmes led by the Congress in several Member states.

C. CHAMBER OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES

The Chamber of Local Authorities held its 30th Session on 23 March 2016. In his communication to the Chamber, President Anders Knappe underlined that the time had come for the European Charter of Local-Government, which since 2014 was in force in all 47 member states of the Council of Europe, to be applied in its entirety. He urged members to work to encourage governments to accept to be bound by all the principles of the Charter. He stressed the importance in this respect of the post-monitoring dialogue, which was a vital tool for Congress members in their goal of achieving a dynamic, vigorous and efficient local democracy in their communities, which fully met the legitimate hopes and aspirations of their citizens.

The first debate of the session concerned the fight against trafficking. The speakers, which included Nicolas Le Coz, president of the Council of Europe of Experts on Actions against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA), Jelena Drenjanin, Committee of the Regions Rapporteur on the eradication of trafficking, Rosita Yeneva, Secretary of the Commission for Combating Trafficking in Burgas, Bulgaria, Brian Varma, Senior Advisor to the City of Amsterdam and Anthony Steen, Chairman of the Human Trafficking Foundation, underlined the huge increase of the problem in recent years, exacerbated by political instability in a number of regions bordering on Europe. Although national governments were taking action to address these crimes, local and regional authorities had an important awareness-raising and preventive role to play to combat of what Anthony Steen referred to as ‘modern-day slavery’, and to identify and assist victims. The Chamber took stock of a variety of constructive approaches that local authorities were taking to tackle this problem more effectively.

The second debate focused on the situation of internally displaced persons in Council of Europe member States. Gert Westerveen, representative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to the Council of Europe, highlighted that, in addition to the arrival of almost a million asylum seekers in 2015, European countries have to cope with an estimated three

million displaced persons. He called on the Congress to help to mobilise local authorities which are in the front line when it comes to providing assistance to these persons. Andrzej Porawski, Executive Director of the Association of Polish Cities, pointed out that Ukraine has some 1,6 million displaced persons and receives little support from the EU compared to that given to Turkey for Syrian refugees. In addition, most of the aid provided by the state was centralised and not disbursed to local authorities, even though they were the ones who were directly affected by the situation.

D. CHAMBER OF REGIONS

During its meeting on 23 March 2016, under the presidency of Gudrun Mosler-Törnström, the Chamber of Regions elected Sergii Chernov (Ukraine ILDG) as Vice-President, replacing Nataliya Romanova (Ukraine, ILDG).

In her communication, the President expressed her concern about the situation in Europe today, where the rise of populism and nationalism goes together with a tendency, in many European states, to re-centralise powers and resources. Gudrun Mosler-Törnström highlighted the importance of protecting the standards of the Charter of Local Self-Government and the Reference Framework for Regional Democracy, contrasting the issue of national governments questioning their international obligations. She also stressed the commitment of the Congress towards the defense of regional democracy and the key role of cross-border cooperation to European integration.

The members of the Chamber discussed in particular the report on “Autonomy and Borders in an Evolving Europe”, presented by Karl-Heinz Lambertz (Belgium, SOC) that analyses the status and size of sub-national entities and the trends in changing competences and borders of the regions. There was a broad consensus that there is no “one size fits all” solution to the territorial controversies: problems have to be addressed through dialogue and mutual understanding, within the constitutional framework of the respective state. The Chamber adopted a Resolution and a Recommendation on this issue

The Chamber also discussed the study on “The Evolution of regionalisation in Council of Europe Member States”, prepared by the Congress Group of Independent Experts on the European Charter of Local Self-Government. The presentation of the study was followed by a broad debate among members of the Chamber who highlighted the current trends on regionalisation in their countries.

E. COMMITTEES

Monitoring Committee

The Monitoring Committee chaired by Philippe Receveur (Switzerland, EPP/CCE) held its first meeting of 2016 on 12 February in Paris. It adopted the first draft report on monitoring of local and regional democracy in France, which commented substantially on the ongoing territorial reform. The Committee also adopted the draft report on local and regional democracy in Slovak Republic, and it also adopted the draft report on the observation of local elections in Ukraine.

The Committee also held a debate on the Congress priorities for 2017-2020 and sent its contribution to the rapporteurs on this subject. An exchange of views took place with the head of the Congress delegation of Azerbaijan. Lastly the work programme 2016-2017 of the Committee- which comprises notably for 2016, 10 monitoring visits, 2/3 fact findings and 4 observation of local elections was also approved.

A fact finding visit took place in Albania on 25 February in the framework of the Congress’ post-electoral dialogue and its mechanism to assess the situation of local and regional democracy, further to the local elections held on 21 June 2015. Monitoring visits on local and regional democracy took place in March and April respectively in Croatia (2-4 March) and Cyprus (5-7 April).

The second meeting of the Monitoring Committee took place on 22 March 2016 on the margin of the 30th Congress session. The Committee members had an exchange of views on a legal opinion drafted by the President of the Group of independent Experts, which concerned the situation in certain municipalities with special language arrangements located on the outskirts of Brussels (Belgium),

notably from the perspective of the European Charter of Local Self-Government. The Committee decided to send this legal opinion to Lisbeth Homans, Flemish Minister of the Interior, and to consider a fact finding visit in Belgium to clarify these issues on the ground in the light of the legal aspects of the concerned situations.

The Committee also examined cases considered by the Bureau of Local authorities amongst which a letter sent by a NGO which raised the case of the Ukrainian municipality of Kirovograd for which the Parliament (Verhovna rada), in application of a package of laws on de-communisation, decided to change the name to Inhulsk, apparently without consulting the municipality. Ukrainian authorities and the mayor of the concerned municipality will be called to comment on the situation.

The Committee also decided to take note of the information report on the above mentioned fact finding visit to Albania and to take it into consideration on the occasion of the next monitoring of local and regional democracy in this country which should take place after the general elections of 2017.

The next meeting of the Monitoring Committee will take place in June 2016.

Governance Committee

The Governance Committee chaired by Marie-Madeleine Mialot Muller (France, SOC) held a meeting on 22 March 2016 in Strasbourg, on the first day of the 30th plenary session. It exchanged views on several draft texts. The first of these was a strategy document on “Preventing corruption and promoting public ethics at local and regional levels”, presented by its thematic rapporteur Herwig van Staa (Austria, EPP/ECC).

The Committee then discussed a joint reflection document (prepared in collaboration with the Current Affairs Committee) on the follow-up to the Congress Strategy to combat radicalisation at grass-roots level – “re-reading the relevant Congress texts”.

The third draft report examined by the Committee, “Open data for better public services”, looks at the potential of open data for improving public service delivery, strengthening local democracy, improving the quality of life in our cities and developing our cultural life and heritage.

Finally, the Committee examined a draft report on “Gender budgeting”, looking at this concept as a tool for local and regional authorities to introduce gender mainstreaming into their budgetary preparations.

The Committee also approved draft terms of reference for a report on “Unable to pay: local authorities in financial difficulty”, to follow up its 2014 report on “Adequate financial resources”, a report on “Developing Europe’s rural areas”, as well as a “Summit of mayors on the prevention of radicalisation leading to violent extremism”, to be held in Rotterdam in November 2016, in the framework of the Congress strategy to combat radicalisation at grassroots level.

The next meeting of the Committee will be on 7 June 2016 in Orleans, France

Current Affairs Committee

The Current Affairs Committee held its first regular meeting of the year in Strasbourg on 22 March 2016 during the 30th Session of the Congress under the presidency of Farid Mukhametshin (Russia, ILGD). It adopted a report on “Women’s Political Participation and Representation at Local and Regional Levels” and terms of reference for two new reports, namely “From reception to integration: the role of local authorities facing migration” and “The situation of Roma and Travellers in the context of rising racism and xenophobia”.

The Committee discussed the joint reflection document (prepared in collaboration with the Governance Committee) on the follow-up to the Congress Strategy to combat radicalisation at grass-roots level. It also reviewed progress on the report on regional and minority languages in Europe today and the report on the role of youth policies at local and regional levels in supporting young people’s transition to autonomy and working life.

The Committee continued to coordinate the Congress contribution to the Council of Europe Campaign ONE in FIVE, through the promotion of the Congress Pact to stop the sexual abuse of children, which has already been signed by more than 60 cities and bodies that have adopted the objectives of the campaign. The Congress' Thematic Spokesperson on Children, Johan van den Hout (Netherlands, SOC) has followed up on the conclusion of the 2015 Seminar for national associations of local and regional authorities on this theme, by coordinating the organisation of a bi-annual meeting for the signatory cities of the Pact, the first of which will be held in the City of Nis in Serbia in 2017.

Committee members took an active part in a number of events, including the 68th plenary meeting of ECRI (Strasbourg, 8-11 December), the PACE conference on "A comprehensive humanitarian and political response to the migration and refugee crisis in Europe" (Paris, 16 December), Forum on social rights (Turin, 18 March), the High-level conference for the launching of Council of Europe's Strategy on the Rights of the Child 2016-2021 (Sofia, 5-6 April), the Assembly of European Regions annual meeting (Timisoara, 12 April) and the Council of Europe Standing Conference of Ministers of Education (Brussels, 12 April).

The next meeting of the Committee will be on 15 June 2016.

III. MONITORING OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL DEMOCRACY

A. MONITORING ACTIVITIES



Photo: Monitoring visit in Republic of Croatia, from 2 to 4 March 2016

The core mission of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities is the effective monitoring of the situation of local and regional democracy in member states by assessing the application of the European Charter of Local Self-Government, adopted in 1985.

In the context of this evaluation, the Congress made 3 monitoring visits and adopted 2 Recommendations between December 2015 and April 2016.

Monitoring visits

Slovak Republic (7-9 December 2015)

A delegation led by the rapporteurs Artur Torres Pereira (Portugal, EPP/CCE) and Leen Verbeek (The Netherlands, SOC), examined the follow-up action taken on the commitments made by this country in

the sphere of devolution when it ratified the European Charter of Local Self-Government in 2000. The last Congress monitoring visit took place in 2006.

The delegation met, in particular the State Secretary of the Ministry of Interior, the Secretary of State to the Minister of Transport, Construction and Regional Development as well as the Mayor of Bratislava. Meetings were also scheduled with the President of the National Parliament, the President of the Supreme Audit Office of the Slovak Republic as well as the Public Defender of Rights. The delegation also met the General Prosecutor of the Slovak Republic, the mayors of Bratislava, Nitra and Dunajská Streda, representatives of the Bratislava and Nitra Self-Governing Regions as well as the national associations of local authorities and members of the Slovak delegation to the Congress.

Croatia (2-4 March 2016)

The Congress rapporteur Ole Haabeth (Norway, SOC) examined the follow-up action taken on the commitments made by this country in the sphere of devolution when it ratified the European Charter of Local Self-Government in 1997. The last Congress monitoring visit took place in 2007.

High level meetings were scheduled in Zagreb, in particular with the Minister of Public Administration, the Deputy Minister of Regional Development and EU Funds, as well as the Deputy Minister and Chief State Treasurer. The delegation also met the President of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Croatia, the General Auditor of the State Audit Office as well as the speaker of the Croatian Parliament. Meetings were also scheduled with representatives of Rijeka City, Primorje-Gorski Kotar County, Omisalj Municipality and the Town of Krk.

Cyprus (5-7 April 2016)

A delegation led by Bernd Vöhringer (Germany, EPP/ECC) and Randi Mondorf (Denmark, ILDG) examined the situation of local democracy in the light of the provisions of the European Charter of Local Self-Government, ratified in the country in 1988. The last monitoring visits took place in 2001 and 2005.

High level meetings were held in Nicosia, with the members of the National Delegation of Cyprus to the Congress, the Mayor of Nicosia and the Vice-President of the Union of Cyprus Municipalities, and the President of the Union of Cyprus Communities. The delegation also met the Minister of Finance, the Permanent Secretary to the Minister of the Interior, and the President of the Supreme Court. Lastly, meetings were also held in Kokkinotrimithia with the President of community council, in Ayios Dhometios and Paphos with the respective mayors.

Recommendations adopted

France

Recommendation 384 (2016) on Local democracy in France was adopted during the 30th Session of the Congress. The rapporteurs Jos Wiene (Netherlands, EPP/CCE) and Gudrun Mosler-Törnström (Austria, SOC) noted the progress made in the decentralisation process.

However, the Congress expresses concern as regards the procedures employed for passing Law No. 2015-29 of 16 January 2015 on regional boundaries, regional and departmental elections and changes to the election timetable. The Congress invites the authorities to review the process for consulting local authorities' direct representatives on all decisions concerning them (Article 4), in particular those concerning their boundaries (Article 5). It further recommends that France review its equalisation system to render it more equitable. Lastly, the report calls on the French authorities to clarify the division of responsibilities between the different tiers of local government to avoid all overlaps and continue to increase the proportion of own resources in local authorities' budgets.

Slovak Republic

During the 30th Session, the Congress adopted Recommendation 387 (2016) on local democracy in the Slovak Republic following its visit to the country in December 2015.

The recommendation underlines the improvements since the last two reports, in 2001 and 2006, respectively on local and regional democracy. The rapporteur Artur Torres Pereira pointed out that these improvements are also a result of the country's ratification of the articles in the European Charter of Local Self-Government, which it had not ratified upon accession. All the provisions of the Charter therefore now apply throughout Slovakia. The rapporteurs stressed the efforts made in terms of decentralisation and noted in particular the registration of the association of representatives from the eight regions which enhanced the existing dialogue between central government and the regional level.

B. POST MONITORING



Photo: The President of the Congress and the President of Georgia, Giorgi Margvelashvili, at the signature of the roadmap, on 16 December 2015

The Post-monitoring is a procedure established by the Congress to ensure a follow up to the implementation of its recommendations to member states on local and regional democracy, through enhanced political dialogue between the authorities of the state concerned and the Congress. The procedure is initiated at the request of a state's authorities. It is essentially based on political dialogue with the Congress and only concerns the recommendations adopted by the Congress with regard to the countries that have accepted the post-monitoring.

The post-monitoring exercises resulted in the signature of roadmaps with Ukraine (May 2015), Portugal (September 2015) and Georgia (December 2015), and are currently in progress with the Republic of Moldova and Armenia.

Road map signed

Georgia (16 December 2015)

The President of the Congress and Georgia's Minister for Regional Development and Infrastructure, Nodar Javakhishvili, signed a road map on the implementation of the monitoring recommendations concerning Georgia. The signing of the road map follows on from the recommendation on the situation of local and regional democracy in Georgia (Recommendation 334 (2013)) and the post-monitoring dialogue conducted in recent months.

On the same occasion, the Congress President and the two rapporteurs, Nigel Mermagen (United Kingdom, ILDG), rapporteur on local democracy, and Helena Pihlajasaari (Finland, SOC), rapporteur

on regional democracy, met the President of Georgia, Giorgi Margvelashvili, the Speaker of the Georgian Parliament and the Finance Minister.

C. OBSERVATION OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL ELECTIONS



Photo: Observation mission of local and regional elections in Ukraine on 25 October 2015

The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities has been taking part in the observer missions for local elections in the 47 Council of Europe member countries and beyond since 1990. The observer missions are conducted at the official request of the national authorities concerned and complement the political monitoring of the European Charter of Local Self-Government.

The Congress is also following the implementation of its recommendations in the context of a post-election dialogue. Between December 2015 and April 2016, the Congress made 1 post-electoral mission.

Post-electoral Dialogue in Albania (24-26 February 2016)

The Congress carried out a fact-finding mission to Albania from 24 to 26 February 2016, in the framework of its post-electoral dialogue with the Albanian authorities. The delegation, headed by Jos Wiene (Netherlands, EPP-CCE), concluded the mission with an exchange of views with representatives of the Central Election Commission of Albania, dealing in particular with the follow-up to Congress recommendations further to its observation of the 2015 local elections.

Other meetings focused in particular on the latest developments and challenges with regard to the implementation of the local government reform in Albania. The delegation also discussed issues relating to the management of the newly formed municipalities and the implications for political representation of the recent changes to electoral boundaries.

The results of the mission were presented during the 30th Session of the Congress. Jos Wiene (Netherlands, EPP-CCE) expressed concerns regarding the state of implementation of the administrative-territorial reform further to the 2015 local elections in Albania, mainly due to the lack of information to the newly formed Municipalities about their new competences and involved also budgetary uncertainties, inherited financial burdens at local level and workforce reduction.

However, the Congress welcomed the implementation of the new Law on the “Organisation and Functioning of Local Government” containing, among other provisions, procedural safeguards for an

inclusive process of the drawing of future territorial boundaries, an issue which was hotly debated between the Government and the opposition prior to the elections.

Based on this fact-finding mission, which was organised for the first time in the framework of its post-electoral dialogue, the Congress encouraged the Albanian authorities to focus on a broader electoral reform addressing, in particular, the de-politicisation and professionalisation of the election administration and the issue of voters residing de facto abroad (this concerns about 1 million of Albanian citizens). The Congress underlined also the need for a legislative package to tackle the corruption and political patronage. The Rapporteur concluded that in the interest of further democratic progress, the inclusiveness of political reform processes was of paramount importance for Albania.

IV. THEMATIC ACTIVITIES

The Congress supports local authorities in the performance of their duties in respect of their citizens and it supports them in their search for solutions to the challenges they face, in particular in terms of security, integration, dialogue and participation, respect for fundamental human and social rights, inclusion of vulnerable populations etc...

It initiates reflections and projects on these topics and contributes actively to the work being done in this connection within the Council of Europe and at European level.

A. YOUTH PARTICIPATION

The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities sees youth participation at local and regional levels as an important policy in the promotion of democratic citizenship. Since October 2014 the Congress has therefore invited young people, chosen following a selection procedure, to take part in its sessions, to have their say in the debates and to exchange with Congress members on the issues on the agenda (see II.A. 30th Session)

B. INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE/RADICALISATION

In the current context of rising extremism, one of the key priorities of the Congress is to promote intercultural and inter-faith dialogue in towns, cities and regions. At the session of March 2016, the rapporteurs Bert Bouwmeester (Netherlands, ILDG) and Josef Neumann (Germany, SOC) presented the new toolkit for use by local and regional elected representatives when organising intercultural and interreligious activities. This initiative is part of the Congress's strategy to combat radicalisation at grassroots level, adopted in February 2015, with the aim of fighting religious radicalisation and stimulating and encouraging intercultural and inter-faith activities at local level.

The toolkit will contain factsheets with links to key texts by the Council of Europe, experts and academics, a leaflet setting out *The 12 Guidelines for inter-faith dialogue at local level*, and a booklet presenting the *Guidelines on preventing radicalisation and manifestations of hatred at grassroots level*. It will be supplemented by a video to encourage elected representatives to use these resources when organising intercultural and inter-faith activities.

The resolution 397 (2016) adopted on the creation of the toolkit asks the national and regional associations of local and regional authorities to support this initiative, in particular by providing translations in their language and disseminating the toolkit, and invites the Congress Spokesperson on Human Rights to include this dimension and the toolkit in his work to raise awareness among local authorities on human rights.

C. CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Congress Thematic Spokesperson on Children, Johan van den Hout (Netherlands, SOC), participated in a high-level conference "Reaching the heights for the rights of the child", on 5 and 6 April 2016 in

Sofia (Bulgaria). This conference was hosted by the State Agency for Child Protection and the Ministry of Labour and other International organisations, in the framework of the Bulgarian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. He said that children should be consulted, recommending the participants to instill into children the desire to participate in the budgetary process, making it intelligible using child friendly documents, and reaching out to them through meetings and tools such as social networks and websites. Johan Van den Hout also stressed the importance of children's parliaments within local councils or even children's participatory budget councils.



The contribution of the Congress to the One in Five campaign of the Council of Europe will end in 2017. The Congress considers inviting cities to meet every two years to take stock of the situation.

D. EUROPEAN LOCAL DEMOCRACY WEEK

In 2016, the annual co-ordination meeting of the ELDW was held in Paris, on 1 February, with the participation of mayors, local councilors, presidents of associations and local coordinators of the project. The assessment of 2015's edition, the presentation of good practices, the discussion on the main theme for 2016 and the certification award ceremony for "12 Stars" were the main points on the agenda. In addition, a first exchange of views was held on the preparation of the 10th anniversary

of the ELDW which will be celebrated in 2017. The Congress was represented by Gaye Doganoglu (Turkey, EPP/CCE), who chaired the meeting in her capacity of Vice-President of the Congress and Political Co-ordinator of the ELDW.

The 2016 edition of the ELDW

Taking up the proposal which was generated at the co-ordination meeting, the theme "*Living together in culturally diverse societies: respect, dialogue, interaction*" was adopted by the Bureau on 8 February. The theme focuses on education for democratic citizenship and human rights and ties in with the current priorities of the Council of Europe and its various bodies, including the Action Plan on Building Inclusive Societies (2016-2017), the Congress strategy to prevent radicalisation at grassroots level and the 2016 World Forum for Democracy's theme of "Education and democracy: how to bridge the social divides?".

To assist the partaking municipalities, associations of local and regional authorities and NGOs in the preparation of their 2016 Local Democracy Week, a concept paper on the 2016 theme, a compilation of thematic ideas, and a list of reference texts as well as the official logo and the 2016 leaflet (in several languages) have been made available on the official website of the ELDW.

E. ROMA INCLUSION

On 17 December 2015 the first Alliance seminar on Roma inclusion at the local level was organised in Lithuania. Representatives of Alliance participants, of the Government's National Minority Department,

Roma civil society organisations and scholars met in Trakai (near Vilnius) to discuss employment, education and the necessity to secure long-term funding. The informal network that was established as a result of the seminar will further pursue the aim to provide an exchange platform for local and regional authorities that strive for change. Representatives of the Dutch cities /regions participating in the Alliance, who had already established a partnership with a Lithuanian participant, provided best practice examples. After the seminar a short visit to a Lithuanian Roma NGO that works in a settlement near Vilnius was organised.

Early 2016, the Alliance management was transferred to the Support Team of the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) for Roma issues. This led to an administrative and logistical reorganisation of the Alliance taskforce. In order to complete this management transfer, the Strategic Guidelines of the Alliance were revised and adopted at the Congress Bureau meeting on 21 March 2016. The new guidelines are more programmatic, entail clear obligations of the Alliance participants and enable the Congress Secretariat together with the SRSG to exclude a participant from the Alliance in case its policies threaten the credibility of the Congress and Council of Europe activities on Roma inclusion.

V. INSTITUTIONAL CO-OPERATION WITHIN THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

A. THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL SECTOR



Photo: Meeting of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe

The Committee of Ministers

Between December 2015 and April 2016, the Congress contributed to the priorities of the presidency of the Committee of Ministers (see I.B. Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers)

In his communication to the Committee of Ministers, on 1st December 2015, the Secretary General of the Congress presented a report of the latest activities of the Congress. He focused in particular on the two main debates that animated the session of October 2015, the refugee and migrant crisis and the phenomenon of radicalization, and stressed that the Congress will contribute to the implementation of the Council of Europe Action plans "Building inclusive societies " and " fight against violent extremism and radicalisation leading to terrorism ", in which local and regional authorities have a key role to play.

Directorate General of Democracy

The Congress has pursued to cooperate closely with the Directorate General of Democracy and its Centre of Expertise for Local Government, by implementing together a new regional project to strengthen the capacities of local authorities within the countries of Eastern Partnership (2015-2017) and the creation of synergies in existing bilateral projects in Albania, Armenia and Ukraine. Regular coordination meetings continue to be held in the Secretariat.

B. THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

The Congress holds regular exchanges with the Parliamentary Assembly, in order to increase co-operation at the level of rapporteurs and respective secretariats as well as in areas of common interest, in particular in the framework of the implementation of Council of Europe Campaigns.

On 16 December, Congress rapporteur on migration and refugees Yoomi Renstrom (Sweden, SOC) participated in the PACE conference on “A comprehensive humanitarian and political response to the migration and refugee crisis in Europe”.

On 28 January 2016, the President of Congress participated in an exchange of views held by the PACE Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media, for the setting-up of a platform for dialogue between Council of Europe and leading representatives of religions and nongovernmental and faith-based organisations. He expressed Congress’ support for this project.

C. EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR DEMOCRACY THROUGH LAW (VENICE COMMISSION)

The Congress has a close and deep co-operation with the Venice Commission, particularly in the fields of election observation and the monitoring of the European Charter of Local Self-Government..

The Council for Democratic Elections (CDE) provides electoral cooperation between the Venice Commission, in its capacity as legal body and the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress, as political organs responsible for election observation. The Congress institutional representatives to the CDE are Jos Wielen (Netherlands, EPP/CCE) and Stewart Dickson (United Kingdom, ILDG). Jos Wielen is currently Chair of the CDE.

A concrete example of co-operation in the framework of the Council for Democratic Elections is the report adopted by the Congress on voters residing de facto in respect of local and regional elections which has been taken up in respect of national elections. Another example concerns the Guidelines for preventing and responding to the misuse of administrative resources during electoral processes.

The Congress has also strengthened its co-operation with the Venice Commission on issues of local and regional democracy. The Congress institutional representative to the plenary session of the Venice Commission is the President of the Monitoring Committee, Philippe Receveur. The opinions of the Venice Commission are also taken into account by Congress rapporteurs during their visits and in recommendations adopted. The Congress and the Venice Commission worked closely, for example, on the territorial reform in Ukraine, and more specifically on the revision of the Chapter on Local Self-Government of the Ukrainian constitution.

In addition, discussions were held on the inclusion of the European Charter of Local Self-Government in domestic law of the 47 States which have ratified the Charter, especially by the domestic courts. Indeed, recent decisions of the supreme courts of certain Member States of the Council of Europe raise questions about the status of international treaties in domestic law, when these decisions almost systematically result in not taking into account this treaty in domestic law.

VI. EXTERNAL COOPERATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

The Committee of the Regions of the European Union

The Congress continued its co-operation with the Committee of the Regions of the European Union (CoR).

On 4 December 2015 the President of the Congress addressed the 115th plenary session of the Committee of the Regions of the European Union (CoR) in Brussels (see I. Political agenda)

On 15 December the President of the Chamber of Regions, Gudrun Mosler-Törnström met bilaterally in Strasbourg the President Committee of the Regions Markku Markkula, for an exchange of views on the perspectives for bilateral co-operation.

Gudrun Mosler-Törnström took part in the meeting of the Commission for Citizenship, Governance, Institutional and External Affairs (CIVEX) in Brussels on 5 February 2016. She presented the preliminary report on the Congress observation of the local elections in Ukraine and the Congress's activities concerning the fight against radicalisation and violent extremism.

In 2015, the Congress and the CoR had decided to reinforce their cooperation by modifying the modalities of their bilateral meetings and on 9 February 2016 the President and the two Presidents of the Congress Chambers met the President, 1st Vice-President and President of the CIVEX Commission of the CoR in Brussels at the first "3+3 Political meeting". The meeting provided the opportunity to identify common priorities with the CoR and enable a move from co-operation to joint action, in particular in the Eastern Partnership countries.

The Presidents discussed the issue of decentralisation in Ukraine and agreed to strengthen their cooperation for this country: the Congress will participate in the task force set up by the Committee of the Regions to support the reform process and reciprocally, members of the Committee of the Regions will be invited to take part in the Congress cooperation activities in the country. The two bodies will also strengthen their collaboration through the Conference of Regional and Local Authorities for the Eastern Partnership (CORLEAP) and the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM) and decided to make corruption prevention and the promotion of ethics at local and regional levels a shared priority: as a first step they will hold a joint conference on this topic in autumn this year or early 2017.

The official participation of the CoR President, Markku Markkula to the Congress Plenary session on 22 March had to be cancelled at the very last moment, due to the Brussels' terrorist attacks. His participation to the Congress Plenary session has been postponed to October 2016.

European Associations of local and regional authorities

The Congress is having an ongoing cooperation with the main associations and organisations representing the regions and cities in Europe.

On 16 November 2015 the Congress organised in Brussels a meeting with the major European Associations of local and regional authorities (EUROCITIES, CEMR, AER, AEBR, CALRE, CPMR). EUROCITIES, CEMR and AER in particular decided to add de-radicalisation and migration policies to their other traditional priorities. The participants agreed to exchange information and documents of mutual interest.

The Congress was represented in the Extraordinary Plenary Assembly of the Assembly of European Regions (AER) on 1-2 December 2015 in Brussels, where Hande Bozatlı, a former Congress member, was re-elected as President. The political priorities of the AER (migrations and refugees; human rights and social inclusion; inter-regional cooperation and youth empowerment) are in line with the Congress fields of action.

VII. COOPERATION PROGRAMMES AND ACTION PLANS



Photo: Workshop “Mayors, leaders for change”, in Republic of Moldova from 2 to 4 February 2016

The aim of the Congress’ co-operation activities is to assist a number of member states in implementing the recommendations adopted by the Congress to provide a practical response to the problems identified in the course of monitoring and post-monitoring activities and the observation of elections and based.

These activities are carried out within the framework of the action plans of the Council of Europe, in close co-operation and synergy with the other entities within the Organisation.

They rely notably on peer exchanges in areas where the Congress can offer specific experience and know-how, such as the role and the responsibilities of local and regional political representatives.

Albania

In the framework of the 2nd phase of the Council of Europe project “*Strengthening Local Government Structures and Cooperation of Local Elected Representatives*”, the Congress continues to be active in Albania. The project, extended until 30 June 2017, aims to support the on-going decentralisation process and the consolidation of the principles of good governance.

Special attention was paid to the preparation of the new draft organic law on the organisation and functioning of local government, adopted on 17 December 2015 by the Albanian Parliament.

In 2016, for the purposes of dialogue and regular co-operation among local government units (LGUs), the associations will be further supported to represent LGUs in the Consultative Council, through the organisation of a series of pluralistic meetings for local elected representatives at both political and technical levels. These will allow LGUs’ representatives to prepare and co-ordinate their positions on issues of common concern, in view of the Consultative Council meetings. Support will be provided to the Albanian Associations of Local and Regional Authorities to strengthen their institutional and advocacy capacities, through the organisation of one statutory meetings/national conference to discuss their draft institutional development strategies and adopt the draft statutory documents.

Finally, the Congress will support the Albanian government in the I set-up of the Consultative Council, and in the drafting of the relevant normative act and internal rules of functioning, while facilitating the consultation of stakeholders, notably Local Government associations.

Armenia

The Congress is currently implementing two projects in Armenia following the local self-government reform in the country.

In the context of the project Armenia 1 “Support for the consolidation of local democracy in Armenia” (2013-2016), funded by the Government of Denmark, the Congress is implementing Line of Action III “Strengthening local elected representatives’ leadership”. This programme aims to increase the knowledge of local elected representatives’ on good practices in the field of local democracy and to strengthen their capacities, so that they can engage in a constructive dialogue amongst themselves, with national authorities and with citizens.

The capacities of local elected representatives especially on the role of councilors in local governance, citizen participation and ethics were strengthened through the implementation of a peer-to-peer base. A micro-finance programme for the organisation of citizen participation initiatives was implemented and the outcome of the initiative was presented to the donor at the occasion of a field visit on 19 January 2016.

During the additional nine months of activities, project activities will focus specifically on local councilors, helping them to define and execute effective policies and set realistic objectives. Other seminars will target Armenian young local leaders. A series of three workshops for local councilors will aim to raise their’ awareness of democratic principles, European standards of local political governance and the importance of citizen participation in decision-making. Moreover, two seminars for Armenian young local leaders will be organised, providing a platform on the exchange of best practices for developing local democracy and helping young political leaders in Armenia to obtain an insight into European practices in this respect.

The project Armenia 2: “Institutional support to the Communities Association of Armenia (CAA)” (2014-2016), funded by the Government of Switzerland as a part of the programme “Improvement of the local self-governance system” and co-ordinated by the Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation (SDC), aims to enhance the capacities of the Communities Association of Armenia to become an active stakeholder in the governance system of the country.

During 2015, a number of activities were held to prepare the CAA for institutional capacity building interventions. The Organisational development (OD) plan for 2016 was adopted by the members of the CAA Board during their meeting held on 11 December 2015.

Furthermore, the CAA has already taken the initiative to improve their transparency by preparing a financial report for 2015 and expenditure plan for 2016, which were presented at the Republican Council session, a decision-making body composed of some 100 mayors, on 26 February 2016. The Congress will keep providing support to the CAA throughout 2016, notably by participating in the formulation of the general five-year strategy of the association.

Ukraine

The 2015-2017 Council of Europe Action Plan for Ukraine, adopted on 21 January 2015 by the Committee of Ministers, includes an important chapter on decentralisation and local government reform.

Since August 2015, the Congress is implementing a project on promoting local democracy in Ukraine, based on the results of activities carried out between April 2014 and May 2015, as part of two previous projects.

This project aims to support the development of local and regional democracy through actions with all its stakeholders: local and regional representatives, Ukrainian youth involved in territorial democracy and representatives of the central government in charge of regional development.

The Congress held a series of workshops “Mayors, leader for changes”, including in Kyiv, on 15 December 2015 where Anders Knape, President of the Chamber of Local Authorities and Vice-

President of the Congress, opened the workshop and outlined the Congress's role in promoting local democracy in the 47 Council of Europe member states through its monitoring activities under the European Charter of Local Self-Government. Nataliya Romanova reported on local and regional democracy in Ukraine and emphasised the role played by the Congress in improving the situation.

In addition, 25 mayors, elected in October 2015, came together in Kyiv, on 15 and 16 December 2015, to exchange views and experiences on the current challenges faced by local authorities in Ukraine. The mayors, together with Anders Knape, Robert Biedron, (Poland, SOC), Mayor of Slupsk, Luzette Wagenaar-Kroon (the Netherlands, EPP/CCE), Mayor of Waterland, Nataliya Romanova and experts discussed the impact of the decentralisation process on local authorities in Ukraine and in other European countries. In particular, Ukrainian mayors emphasised the importance of more active and inclusive involvement of citizens so they could become active players of sustainable improvement in their communities.

The Congress also implemented a series of seminars for young local leaders, aimed at spreading a culture of democracy by raising awareness on local and regional democracy principles, and developing the participants' capacities to engage locally in an active and qualified manner.

From 9 to 11 February 2016, the Congress organised a regional seminar for young local leaders in Kyiv. Congress member Vitalii Oluyko (Ukraine, SOC) welcomed the 27 participants, at the opening, and encouraged them to get further involved, as it is this new generation that will help to make an effective change in Ukraine.

The Congress Secretary General, Andreas Kiefer, visited Kyiv, Vinnytsya and Kharkiv, from 1 – 4 March 2016. He met the chairman of the Association of Ukrainian Cities (also Mayor of Kyiv), the Mayor of Kharkiv, presidents of regional councils (Kyiv, Zhytomyr, Vinnytsya and Kharkiv) as well as municipal councils of Vinnytsya and Kyiv. The interlocutors of the Secretary General underlined that the contributions of the Congress and of the Council of Europe in supporting Ukraine in strengthening democracy, human rights and the rule of law is very appreciated by mayors, councillors and young local leaders, who are the main beneficiaries of Congress activities in Ukraine.

In addition to addressing a conference on fighting corruption of mayors and councillors, organised in Kyiv by Hanna Starikova, President of the Kyiv Regional Council, for more than 500 regional and municipal councillors, the Congress Secretary General also took part in meetings of a delegation of the Committee of Ministers in Kyiv¹ and in a workshop on "Mayors – leaders for change" organised by the Congress in Vinnitsya.

EU/CoE co-operation framework for the Eastern Partnership

Within the structure of the CoE/EU Programmatic Co-operation Framework (PCF) 2015 – 2017 for Eastern Partnership countries, the Congress² has made significant headway since its implementation at the beginning of 2015, to enhance the institutional frameworks of these respective countries in its implementation of the thematic programme V.2 on "Strengthening institutional frameworks".

To highlight and address the legislative and practical gaps for effective implementation of respective responsibilities, a "study on the roles and responsibilities of mayors and local councillors in the Eastern Partnership countries" was developed. This study, published in March 2016, is based on experts' reports and Congress recommendations on the implementation of the European Charter of Local Self-Government. The various meetings convened in April and May 2015 to elaborate on the national reports and provide recommendations for the study's methodology and recommendations, provided an important networking basis for the establishment of a community of practice involving local elected representatives, experts and trainers. Their first meeting was held on 14 - 15 January 2016 in Strasbourg, with discussions focusing on best practices and on support in the design and implementation of current and future activities.

¹ See CM/inf(2016)7

² In partnership with the Directorate General of Democracy and its Centre of Expertise for local government reform

Based on the analyses carried out by the programme on the respective national legislations and the identification of common problems, a series of country workshops were organised in the Republic of Moldova and Georgia (in February 2016) as well as in Armenia in December 2015 and March 2016 to promote the ethical behavior and strengthen the institutional and leadership capacities of local elected authorities. They enable mayors to develop their skills to plan effectively and strategically, whilst involving relevant stakeholders and fostering citizen participation in local decision-making processes.

An additional workshop was organised from 29 to 30 March 2016 to incorporate Ukrainian mayors into the programme of activities.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Agenda of the 30th Session (22-24 March 2016)

CG/2016(30)OJ-PROV

Theme for 2016: Ethics and transparency at local and regional level

Link: <http://bit.ly/agenda-30th-session>

Appendix 2: Resolutions and Recommendations adopted at the 30th Session of the Congress

Resolutions:

- [THE CONGRESS / RESOLUTION 396 \(2016\) / 22 March 2016](#)

Verification of new members' credentials and new appointment procedures - Rapporteurs: Gaye DOGANOGLU, Turkey (L, EPP/CEE) and Leen VERBEEK, Netherlands (R, SOC)

- [THE CONGRESS / RESOLUTION 397 \(2016\) / 22 March 2016](#)

Organising intercultural and interreligious activities: a toolkit for local authorities / Co-rapporteurs: Bert BOUWMEESTER, Netherlands (L, ILDG) , Josef NEUMANN, Germany (R, SOC)

- [THE CONGRESS / RESOLUTION 398 \(2016\) / 23 March 2016](#)

Autonomy and borders in an evolving Europe / Principles, frameworks and procedures for protecting and modifying status, competences and borders of sub-national entities within domestic law / Rapporteur: Karl-Heinz LAMBERTZ, Belgium (R, SOC)

Recommendations:

- [THE CONGRESS / RECOMMENDATION 384 \(2016\) / 22 March 2016](#)

Local and regional democracy in France - Rapporteurs: Jakob (Jos) WIENEN, Netherlands (L, EPP/CCE) and Gudrun MOSLER-TÖRNSTRÖM, Austria (R, SOC)

- [THE CONGRESS / RECOMMENDATION 385 \(2016\) / 23 March 2016](#)

Autonomy and borders in an evolving Europe / Principles, frameworks and procedures for protecting and modifying status, competences and borders of sub-national entities within domestic law / Rapporteur: Karl-Heinz LAMBERTZ, Belgium (R, SOC)

- [THE CONGRESS / RECOMMENDATION 386 \(2016\) / 23 March 2016](#)

Observation of local elections in Ukraine (25 October 2015) / Rapporteur: Jos WIENEN, Netherlands (L, EPP/CCE)

- [THE CONGRESS / RECOMMENDATION 387 \(2016\) / 24 March 2016](#)

Local and regional democracy in the Slovak Republic / Rapporteurs: Artur TORRES PEREIRA, Portugal (L, EPP/CCE) and Leen VERBEEK, the Netherlands (R, SOC)

Appendix 3: Communication by Jean-Claude Frécon, President of the Congress, at the opening of the 30th session

Tuesday 22 March 2016

Dear Colleagues,

At the opening of our session, at this beginning of the year 2016, I would like to share with you my thoughts concerning the situation in Europe.

No one would deny that dark clouds are gathering over the continent and that they are coming from all directions.

Waves of migrants and refugees have continued both to arrive at Europe's external borders and in many cases to cross into Europe. European states' difficulty in reaching an agreement on the reception and integration of these hundreds of thousands of persons has, alas, revealed an absence of real solidarity.

Clouds are also gathering as a result of serious conflicts not only on Europe's doorstep, in the Middle East and Africa, but also in Europe itself, with the continuing violence in the Donbass region and the renewed tensions between some of our Organisation's member states.

There are yet other clouds in the form of the economic and financial crisis, which continues, despite a number of sunny spells here and there, with few noteworthy signs of improvement where unemployment and particularly youth unemployment are concerned.

And last but not least clouds formed by the terrorist threats which hang over us like a Sword of Damocles and may well strike one of our countries or one of our cities at any time.

The terrorist attacks carried out in Paris in November are still very much in our minds, all the more so because they were followed by others in several countries, in particular Turkey where they have occurred again and again. The fear of similar attacks is such that a state of emergency is still in force here in France, while we are meeting.

All of these threats affect our societies, our populations, and our citizens, but they also affect the European institutions. The European Union and the European vision have been undermined and the Schengen area is on the point of imploding before our eyes. Our governments' failure to manage these crises is threatening the very idea of Europe.

The European Union is admittedly first in the line of fire in this major crisis but the Council of Europe is also affected when, in order to rise to the challenges they encounter, our member states' governments are prepared to give up that which is at the very core of our mission. Human rights and the rule of law are currently under very real threat in most of our countries. Revolt is brewing throughout our societies and populism is flourishing. We are witnessing the emergence of increasingly authoritarian governments in several of our member states. Newspapers are being closed down, some televisions are being censored and others refused the right to broadcast; freedom of thought and expression are threatened a little more each day.

I do not wish to draw a deliberately bleak picture of the continent but nor do I wish to pretend that we do not have legitimate concerns. Turning a blind eye to these threats means accepting the problems which will inevitably follow. We have a duty to make an honest assessment of the situation if we want to avoid such problems.

This week we will be considering our Congress' work to strengthen local and regional democracy. One might legitimately ask whether, in this increasingly difficult context, our activities are not marginal, not to say inadequate. And one might be tempted to reply that "yes, there are more urgent matters than local democracy!"

But quite the opposite is true and we must continue to point out that local and regional authorities are key actors in democracy at all levels. They help to ensure good governance and the democratic

stability of states. They have ideas on how to respond and are in a position to combat the threats facing us. But their opinion is not sought often enough; they are not sufficiently consulted or mobilised; and they are not sufficiently networked. Central governments do not do enough to involve them and do not communicate with them sufficiently.

We can see this in cases concerning terrorism and radicalisation. Not only do governments not cooperate sufficiently with one another but they do not use all available domestic resources. Instead of opting for law enforcement alone, governments should do more to involve local and regional authorities, which, owing to their proximity to the citizens, are in a better position to help prevent potentially dangerous situations.

As regards the economic and financial crisis affecting our countries, I firmly believe that local and regional authorities are also key players in economic recovery for they can act as a lever by fostering work and investment at local level.

Dear Colleagues, given the threats facing our societies, states may be very tempted to increase their powers. But it must be borne in mind that local and regional authorities have become an essential element of government. It is by strengthening their role and their powers that we can together help to find appropriate solutions to the problems facing us.

Our European Charter of Local Self-Government is an essential part of this system. It is a text that is applicable and which remains up-to-date and relevant; it provides guidance to local and regional authorities on how to rise to the challenges facing us, challenges which are undeniably more serious than any we have faced since the end of the Second World War.

I wish to convey this message not only with gravity but also and above all in the firm belief that we local and regional representatives hold part of the answer to the problems facing Europe.

Dear colleagues, this session which is now opening will provide the opportunity to discuss the problems I have just described. We must work with conviction and determination, and spare no effort. I trust that this session will be fruitful and rewarding for each and every one of us.

Thank you for your attention

Appendix 4: Compilation of Congress texts on governance/corruption/migration/radicalisation

To download the electronic version with links to the individual documents:

<http://bit.ly/congress-texts-2016CEMR>

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I. LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNANCE

Congress texts

- Adequate financial resources for local authorities
 - [Resolution 372](#), [Recommendation 362 \(2014\)](#),
[Explanatory memorandum CPL\(27\)FINAL](#)
- Adequate Strategy on the right of local authorities to be consulted by other levels of government
 - [Resolution 368 \(2014\)](#), [Explanatory memorandum CG\(26\)9FINAL](#)
- E-media: Game changer for local and regional politicians
 - [Resolution 395 \(2015\)](#), [Explanatory memorandum CG/2015\(29\)14FINAL](#)
- Recurring issues based on assessments resulting from Congress monitoring and election observation missions
 - [Recurring issues 2010 – 2013](#)
- Conditions of office for elected representatives
 - [Resolution 393 \(2015\)](#), [Recommendation 383 \(2015\)](#),
[Explanatory memorandum CG/2015\(29\)15FINAL](#)
- New forms of local governance
 - [Resolution 389 \(2015\)](#), [Explanatory memorandum CPL/2015\(29\)4FINAL](#)
- Autonomy and borders in an evolving Europe
 - [Resolution 398\(2016\)](#) and [Recommendation 385 \(2016\)](#),
[Explanatory memorandum CPR30\(2016\)02-final](#)

II. CORRUPTION AND PUBLIC ETHICS

Congress texts

- European Code of conduct for the political integrity of local and regional elected representatives
 - [Resolution 79 \(1999\)](#), [Recommendation 60 \(1999\)](#),
[Explanatory memorandum CG \(6\) 8 rev. Part II](#)
- Rights and duties of local and regional elected representatives: the risks of corruption
 - [Resolution 316 \(2010\)](#), [Explanatory memorandum CG\(19\)10](#)
- Survey on promoting transparency and ethical values and counteracting corruption at local and regional level (2012)
 - [Document prepared by the secretariat of the Congress](#)

- Tasks and duties, to be fulfilled by local and regional elected representatives, that may involve corruption risks and/or affect ethical behaviour (2010)
 - [Background Paper CG/GT/CDR\(19\)2](#)

Articles and speeches on corruption

- Debate on the fight against corruption: pointers for action at local and regional levels (24th Session of the Congress, 19-21 March 2013)
 - [Article](#)
- Debate on Corruption corrodes democracy (27th session of the Congress, 14-16 October 2014)
 - [Article](#), [Conclusions](#)
- Debates on ethics and transparency at local and regional level I-II (30th Session of the Congress, 22-24 March 2016)
 - Speeches by [Elizabeth Dávid-Barrett](#), [Marin Mrčela](#) and [Imrich Žigo](#)

III. MIGRANTS AND INTEGRATION POLICIES

Conventions

- Convention on the participation of foreigners in public life at local level
 - [CETS No.144](#)

Declarations

- The reception of refugees in Europe
 - [Declaration \(2015\)](#)

Congress recommendations and resolutions

- Organising intercultural and interreligious activities: a pedagogical toolkit for the use of the local authorities
 - [Resolution 397 \(2016\)](#), [Explanatory memorandum CG30\(2016\)04-final](#)
- Promoting diversity through intercultural education and communication strategies
 - [Resolution 375 \(2014\)](#), [Recommendation 365 \(2014\)](#)
- Migrants' access to regional labour markets
 - [Resolution 362 \(2013\)](#), [Recommendation 347 \(2013\)](#),
[Explanatory memorandum CPR\(25\)3](#)
- Integration through self-employment: promoting migrant entrepreneurship in European municipalities
 - [Resolution 358 \(2013\)](#), [Recommendation 343 \(2013\)](#),
[Explanatory memorandum CPL\(25\)2](#)
- Meeting the challenge of interfaith and intercultural tensions at local level
 - [Resolution 323 \(2011\)](#), [Recommendation 304 \(2011\)](#)
- Education for democratic citizenship: tools for cities
 - [Resolution 332 \(2011\)](#)
- Cultural Integration of Muslim Women in European Cities
 - [Resolution 318 \(2010\)](#), [Explanatory memorandum CG\(19\)12](#)

- Equality and diversity in local authority employment and service provision
 - [Resolution 281 \(2009\)](#), [Recommendation 262 \(2009\)](#)
- Minority languages – an asset for regional development
 - [Resolution 301 \(2010\)](#), [Recommendation 286 \(2010\)](#),
 - [Explanatory memorandum CPR\(18\)3](#)
- Intercultural cities
 - [Resolution 280 \(2009\)](#), [Recommendation 261 \(2009\)](#)
- Social approach to the fight against racism at local and regional level
 - [Resolution 264 \(2008\)](#), [Recommendation 246 \(2008\)](#)
- Improving the integration of migrants through local housing policies
 - [Resolution 270 \(2008\)](#), [Recommendation 252 \(2008\)](#),
 - [Explanatory memorandum CPL\(15\)5Rep](#)
- The development of social cohesion indicators - The concerted local and regional approach
 - [Resolution 226 \(2007\)](#), [Recommendation 207 \(2007\)](#),
 - [Explanatory memorandum CG\(13\)39PART2](#)
- Effective access to social rights for immigrants: the role of local and regional authorities
 - [Resolution 218 \(2006\)](#), [Recommendation 194 \(2006\)](#),
 - [Explanatory memorandum CG \(13\) 12 part II](#)
- Intercultural and inter-faith dialogue: initiatives and responsibilities of local authorities
 - [Resolution 202 \(2005\)](#), [Recommendation 170 \(2005\)](#)
- Cultural Identity in peripheral urban areas: the role of local and regional authorities
 - [Resolution 205 \(2005\)](#), [Recommendation 177 \(2005\)](#)
- Migration flows and social cohesion in South-East Europe: the role of local and regional authorities
 - [Resolution 175 \(2004\)](#), [Recommendation 147 \(2004\)](#),
 - [Explanatory memorandum CG \(11\) 9 Part II](#)
- A pact for the integration and participation of people of immigrant origin in Europe's towns, cities and regions
 - [Resolution 181 \(2004\)](#), [Recommendation 153 \(2004\)](#),
 - [Explanatory memorandum CPL \(11\) 4 Part II](#)
- The participation of foreign residents in public life at local level – consultative bodies
 - [Resolution 141 \(2002\)](#), [Recommendation 115 \(2002\)](#),
 - [Explanatory memorandum CPL \(9\) 5 Part II](#)
- Social cohesion in towns
 - [Resolution 70 \(1998\)](#), [Recommendation 51 \(1998\)](#)

Other texts

- Protection of migrants and asylum seekers: States' main legal obligations under the Council of Europe Conventions
 - [Background paper](#), [Press release](#), [Letter by Thorbjørn Jagland](#)

IV. PREVENTING RADICALISATION AND BUILDING INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES

Council of Europe Action Plans

- The fight against violent extremism and radicalisation leading to terrorism. Action plan 2015-2017
 - [CM\(2015\)74-addfinal](#)
- Action plan on building inclusive societies (2016-2019)
 - [CM\(2016\)25](#)

Congress recommendations and resolutions

- Organising intercultural and interreligious activities: a toolkit for the use of the local authorities
 - [Resolution 397 \(2016\)](#), [Explanatory memorandum CG30\(2016\)04-final](#)
- Guidelines for local and regional authorities on preventing radicalisation and manifestations of hate at grassroots level
 - [Resolution 384 \(2015\)](#), [Explanatory memorandum CG/2015\(29\)5FINAL](#)
- Combating radicalisation at grassroots level: the role of local and regional authorities
 - [Resolution 381 \(2015\)](#), [Recommendation 371 \(2015\)](#),
[Explanatory memorandum CG/2015\(28\)14FINAL](#)
- Congress strategy to combat radicalisation at grass-roots level
 - [CG/BUR/2015\(27\)22](#)
- Promoting diversity through intercultural education and communication strategies
 - [Resolution 375 \(2014\)](#), [Recommendation 365 \(2014\)](#),
[Explanatory memorandum CPL\(20\)2](#)
- Education for democratic citizenship: tools for cities
 - [Resolution 332 \(2011\)](#)
- Meeting the challenge of interfaith and intercultural tensions at local level
 - [Resolution 323 \(2011\)](#), [Recommendation 304 \(2011\)](#)
- Cultural integration of Muslim women in European cities
 - [Resolution 318 \(2010\)](#), [Explanatory memorandum CG\(19\)12](#)
- Intercultural cities
 - [Resolution 280 \(2009\)](#), [Recommendation 261 \(2009\)](#),
[Explanatory memorandum CPL\(16\)1REP](#)
- The need for regional cultural identity
 - [Resolution 268 \(2008\)](#), [Recommendation 250 \(2008\)](#),
[Explanatory memorandum CPR\(15\)4REC](#)
- Social approach to the fight against racism at local and regional level
 - [Resolution 264 \(2008\)](#), [Recommendation 246 \(2008\)](#)
- European Urban Charter I and II - Manifesto for a new urbanity (1992, 2008)
 - [European Urban Charter I](#)
 - [European Urban Charter II Manifesto for a new urbanity](#)
- Intercultural and interreligious dialogue: an opportunity for local democracy
 - [Recommendation 245 \(2008\)](#), [Explanatory memorandum CG\(15\)15REP](#)

- Urban security in Europe
 - [Recommendation 197 \(2006\)](#), [Explanatory memorandum CPL\(13\)5](#)
- Intercultural and inter-faith dialogue: initiatives and responsibilities of local authorities
 - [Resolution 202 \(2005\)](#), [Recommendation 170 \(2005\)](#),
[Explanatory memorandum CPL \(12\) 4](#)
- Cultural identity in peripheral urban areas: the role of local and regional authorities
 - [Resolution 205 \(2005\)](#), [Recommendation 177 \(2005\)](#)
- A pact for the integration and participation of people of immigrant origin in Europe's towns, cities and regions
 - [Resolution 181 \(2004\)](#), [Recommendation 153 \(2004\)](#),
[Explanatory memorandum CPL \(11\) 4 Part II](#)
- Tackling terrorism – the role and responsibilities of local authorities
 - [Recommendation 134 \(2003\)](#), [Resolution 159 \(2003\)](#)
- The participation of foreign residents in public life at local level – consultative bodies
 - [Resolution 141 \(2002\)](#), [Recommendation 115 \(2002\)](#),
[Explanatory memorandum CPL \(9\) 5 Part II](#)
- Manual on Local Authorities and Urban Crime Prevention
 - [Resolution 116 \(2001\)](#), [Explanatory memorandum CPL \(8\) 2 Part II](#)
- Crime and urban insecurity in Europe: the role of local authorities
 - [Resolution 99 \(2000\)](#), [Explanatory memorandum CPL \(7\) 6 Part II](#)
- Crime and urban insecurity in Europe
 - [Resolution 57 \(1997\)](#), [Explanatory memorandum CPL \(4\) 5, Part II](#)

Other texts

- The 12 Guidelines for interfaith dialogue at local level (Conference, Montchanin, France, 23-24 November 2006)
 - [The 12 Guidelines](#)

As part of its monitoring of local and regional democracy in Europe, the Congress maintains a regular dialogue with member states of the Council of Europe. The Committee of Ministers, which includes the 47 Foreign Ministers of these states, the Conference of Ministers responsible for local and regional authorities, as well as its Steering Committees – like the one on Local and Regional Democracy (CDLR) – are partners in this regard.

Several times a year, the President and the Secretary General of the Congress provide the representatives of the 47 member states in the Committee of Ministers with a record of its activities and hold an exchange of views.



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The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member states, 28 of which are members of the European Union. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities is an institution of the Council of Europe, responsible for strengthening local and regional democracy in its 47 member states. Composed of two chambers – the Chamber of Local Authorities and the Chamber of Regions – and three committees, it brings together 648 elected officials representing more than 200 000 local and regional authorities.

