



THE CONGRESS OF  
LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES  
**COUNCIL OF EUROPE**

# ACTIVITY REPORT

(April to end of November 2013)

Communication by the  
Congress Secretary General

at the 1187th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies  
on 11 December 2013

CG(25)26





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# INTRODUCTION

Since the last activity report of 3 April 2013, the Congress has carried out a wide range of activities in implementing its priorities and in pursuing its thematic reform. It has continued to advance with its three-step approach of monitoring the situation of local and regional democracy, post-monitoring dialogue and targeted co-operation activities. During its 25th Session in October 2013, the rules of procedure for monitoring, election observation and post-monitoring dialogue were revised based on the experience gained from their practical application.

Since April, the Congress has fielded several monitoring missions as well as a post-monitoring mission and observed elections to the City Assembly of Yerevan. It has made progress in elaborating road maps for implementing its recommendations in the framework of post-monitoring dialogue.

It has also advanced with its co-operation projects and continued to take an active part in strengthening the local and regional dimension of Council of Europe action plans for countries.

The Congress has co-operated closely with the Armenian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers in organising several conferences. The Congress is looking forward to co-operating with the Austrian Chairmanship in the coming months in strengthening local and regional democracy in close cooperation with member states's governments and with the operational directorates general of the Council of Europe's secretariat.

The Congress has organised conferences on cultural diversity and residence-based participation of has contributed to different labs of the World Forum for Democracy and has held a joint conference to discuss the current situation of decentralisation in Europe, on the occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the European Charter of Local Self-Government and the 60<sup>th</sup> of the European Charter of Municipal Liberties. The European Alliance of Cities and Regions for Roma Inclusion, launched in March, has also pursued its activities under the Joint Programme "ROMACT" between the Council of Europe and the European Commission which took effect as to the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2013. As part of the Congress' action for Roma, the 4th Dostal-Congress Prize for Municipalities was awarded during the October session to three cities/regions for their active Roma inclusion policies.

During the 25th Session, Congress members had very productive exchanges of views with Ministers and governmental representatives. These exchanges have highlighted the spirit of an open dialogue with member States and their governments that the Congress is seeking to strengthen.

San Marino became the 47th country to ratify the European Charter of Local Self-Government and the Charter is now covering 100 per cent of the Council of Europe territory, which is a solid basis to deepening the Charter.

Among other issues discussed were responses of local and regional authorities to the economic crisis, promotion of migrant entrepreneurship at local level, better access of migrants to regional labour markets, prospects for effective transfrontier co-operation in Europe as well as fighting political extremism at local and regional level.

In 2014, the general theme for Congress sessions will focus on building democracy and our societies together with young people and promoting youth participation and the Congress will involve the parliamentary Assembly and the intergovernmental sector.



## **Communication by Andreas Kiefer, Congress Secretary General to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (11 December 2013)**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased with this opportunity to continue the tradition of dialogue between you and the Congress. It has been eight months since my last communication to you on 3 April, and the Congress has carried out a wide range of activities that you can find in my written communication distributed to you, which covers the period until the end of November 2013.

### **PRIORITIES – MONITORING**

Over this period, we have continued to advance with our three-step approach of monitoring the situation of local and regional democracy, post-monitoring dialogue and targeted co-operation activities. This approach was presented to you by Congress President Herwig van Staa in September. During the 25th Session of the Congress in October, the rules of procedure for monitoring, election observation and post-monitoring dialogue were developed further and were brought to the attention of the Committee of Ministers in the 1185th meeting on 19-21 November 2013.

Since April, the Congress has fielded monitoring missions to Ukraine, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Belgium and Armenia, as well as a post-monitoring mission to Portugal, and observed elections to the City Assembly of Yerevan. We have made progress in elaborating road maps for implementing our recommendations in the framework of post-monitoring dialogue. In this regard, the President will send a letter to your Group of Rapporteurs on Democracy, GR-DEM, concerning the recurrent issues revealed by our monitoring, and we look forward to discussing them with you.

### **PRIORITIES – CO-OPERATION**

We have also advanced with our co-operation projects, in particular in Albania – thanks to your voluntary contributions – and continued to take an active part in strengthening the local and regional dimension of Council of Europe action plans for specific countries (e.g. UKR, GEO, ARM).

In pursuing its co-operation with the European Union, the Congress participated in the meeting of CORLEAP (Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of the Eastern Partnership) in Vilnius in September, prior to the Partnership's Vilnius Summit last week – which has reaffirmed, to our great satisfaction, the crucial importance of local democracy and citizen participation for the Partnership's objectives, and the need for strengthening the role of local and regional authorities, with a clear reference to the European Charter of Local Self-Government.

### **THEMATIC**

A few words about our thematic activities. Over this period, the Congress has organised conferences on changing perceptions of cultural diversity among the local population and on the residence-based participation of foreign residents as a new reality of modern democracy, respectively in Ankara and in Strasbourg. Congress members have contributed as speakers and moderators of the labs of the World Forum for Democracy in November. Also in November, the Congress and the Council of European Municipalities and Regions held a joint conference in Strasbourg to discuss the current situation of decentralisation in Europe, on the occasion of the anniversaries of the European Charter of Local Self-Government (25 years) and the European Charter of Municipal Liberties (60 years).

I should point out in this context that in October, San Marino became the 47th country to ratify the European Charter of Local Self-Government, and I would like to congratulate the San Marino Delegation and thank it for this important step. Thus, the Charter is now covering 100 per cent of the Council of Europe territory, and a special ceremony was organised during the 25th Session of the Congress to mark this occasion. We will continue to convince member States to accede to the remaining articles, by which they had not declared themselves bound when ratifying the Charter. However, the historic and often the legal context have changed, and for many member states the

conditions or reasons no longer exist to justify this situation. I am pleased in this regard that the Serbian State Secretary for local government recently told me his country would consider doing so in the near future as a result of reforms undertaken in co-operation with the Council of Europe.

## INTERGOVERNMENTAL SECTOR

We have pursued co-operation with the intergovernmental sector. As its contribution to the Council of Europe's "One in Five" Campaign, the Congress has been promoting its Pact of Towns and Regions to stop sexual violence against children. In the last three months, our Thematic Spokesperson on Children, Mr Johan van den Hout, visited the Netherlands, Cyprus and the United Kingdom to raise the Pact's visibility. As a result, more than 20 cities and regions have already committed themselves to joining the Pact since its launch in March. These include, among others, Land Berlin in Germany and Calabria Province of Italy, Land Tyrol in Austria, the cities of Nicosia, Limassol and Heraklion, a number of Swiss and Dutch municipalities – among them Rotterdam – as well as the City of Liverpool in the United Kingdom and Dammarie-les-Lys in France, home town of Parliamentary Assembly President Jean-Claude Mignon.

The European Alliance of Cities and Regions for Roma Inclusion, launched by the Congress in March, has also pursued its activities under the Joint Programme "ROMACT" between the Council of Europe and the European Commission, which started on 1 October 2013. On 18 December, Paris will become the 121st city or region to join the Alliance in an official ceremony in the City Hall. As part of our action for Roma, the 4th Dosta!-Congress Prize for Municipalities was awarded during the October session to the cities of Opatowitz in the Czech Republic and Heraklion in Greece, as well as the regional authority of Kocaeli in Turkey. However, sustaining Alliance activities may be at risk and become problematic next year due a lack of funding the Alliance's staff under the ROMACT Programme, which would be a very unfortunate setback. The European Commission is aware of this and we hope that progress can be made soon.

The Congress has co-operated closely with the Armenian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers in organising conferences on citizen participation in local democracy and on the status of capital cities, and took part in a conference on fighting racism, intolerance and xenophobia in Europe. We were pleased to learn that Sarajevo intends to host the next CoE conference of mayors of capital cities during the Bosnian chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers in 2015. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Armenia for advancing the local democracy agenda, and to congratulate my home country, Austria, on taking up the Chairmanship last month. The Congress is looking forward to further co-operating with the Austrian Chairmanship in the coming months after holding the first joint conference on integration policies at local level in the first Austrian human rights city, Graz, last week.

## SESSIONS

Allow me now to highlight the most significant past event – the 25th Session of the Congress, which took place in Strasbourg from 29 to 31 October. First of all, I would like to thank those delegations who helped to organise the participation of their Ministers and government officials in the session. Congress members had very productive exchanges of views with Deputy Prime Minister Armen GEVORGYAN of Armenia, Deputy Prime Minister Liviu Nicolae DRAGNEA of Romania, Minister of Internal Affairs Gian Carlo VENTURINI of San Marino, Minister of State Fergus O'DOWD of Ireland and Parliamentary Secretary for Culture and Local Government Jose HERRERA of Malta. These exchanges have highlighted the spirit of an open dialogue with you and your governments that we are seeking to strengthen, by associating national authorities with our sessions.

We will be pursuing this dialogue during the next Congress' session from 25 to 27 March 2014, when we would be pleased to welcome the participation of Ministers from Austria representing the Committee of Ministers' Chairmanship, and from Armenia, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Sweden, if the respective reports will be adopted by the Monitoring Committee.

The 25th Session in October also saw the debates of monitoring reports for Hungary, Ireland, Ukraine, Albania and Denmark – as well as on the observation of local elections in "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" and of the Yerevan City Assembly. Among other issues discussed were responses of local and regional authorities to the economic crisis, promotion of migrant entrepreneurship at local level, better access of migrants to regional labour markets, prospects for effective transfrontier co-operation in Europe, regions and territories with special status, as well as regionalisation and devolution in a context of economic crisis. I should add that the session's current



affairs debate on fighting political extremism at local and regional level, with the participation of Mayor of Athens Yiorgos KAMINIS and Robert Schuman Foundation researcher Magali BALENT, has evoked great interest and active contribution from Congress members.

Next year, we will keep with the tradition of having a general theme for both Congress sessions, which was this year "Europe in Crisis: Challenges to Local and Regional Democracy". In 2014, we will focus on building democracy together with young people, empowering youth and promoting youth participation, which we will pursue in close co-operation with the intergovernmental sector and the Parliamentary Assembly. We are planning debates with representatives of youth organisations in March – at the session which will also feature a report on local and regional policies to empower Roma young people. We also have an initiative to invite young people from all the 47 member states to attend and to participate in the Congress session in October, which we are currently discussing with our partners in the Youth Department of DG 2.

## WORKING CONDITIONS

However, in order to develop these activities, and to sustain the initiatives already launched, the Congress needs to have adequate human and budgetary resources, which have been further reduced for 2014. I informed the Congress Bureau of the recent budget decisions which took note, but expressed its concern on the impact this reduction will have on the statutory work and the operational activities of the Congress. This is why I would like again to call for possible secondments and voluntary contributions from your governments to support the Congress action – monitoring and post-monitoring dialogue, election observation, co-operation programmes, thematic work, the Alliance, the Pact supporting "one in five" – and to ensure that this action remains credible and meaningful and brings about concrete results. The job description for the statutory requirements can be found on the "secondments" website, and I am happy to provide further information, if you wish.

Thank you.



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# **1. Latest political developments**

## **a. Agenda**

- **Exchange of views of the Congress Secretary General with the Committee of Ministers (4 April 2013)**

In his communication, Andreas Kiefer presented the Congress activities since November 2012 (see under “cooperation with the Committee of Ministers”)

- **General Meeting of the “Deutsche Städtetag” (Frankfurt, 24 April 2013)**

The Congress Secretary General presented to the participants in the annual general meeting of the “Deutsche Städtetag”, the role of the Congress concerning grassroots democracy in Europe. In the discussion on “Europe of citizens- protecting and developing the democracy”, he explained how the Congress helps to develop and protect a common standard of local democracy in Europe by monitoring the implementation of and compliance with the European Charter of Local Self-Government, as well as by carrying out election observations and developing follow-up activities and partnerships with member states.

- **Information meeting with European regions representatives (Brussels, 25 April 2013)**

The Congress Secretary General made a presentation and held an exchange of views with representatives of European local and regional authorities on Congress activities, in particular on Congress priorities for 2013-2016 as well as on cooperation programmes. The meeting took place in the Brussels liaison office with the support of Ambassador Torbjørn Frøysnes, Head of the Office.

- **10th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Culture (Moscow, 15 April 2013)**

In his intervention, President van Staa reiterated that two thirds and three quarters of public cultural spending today is carried out at local level, and he insisted on the need to broaden the competences of local and regional authorities. He highlighted the necessity to engage in this process other partners such as civil society organisations, cultural minority groups as well as the private sector in order to encourage cultural innovation, to broaden citizen’s access to culture and to enhance their participation in cultural democracy.

- **24th Session of the Council of Europe Standing Conference of Ministers of Education (Helsinki, 26 April 2013)**

Jean-Claude Frécon, President of the Chamber of Local Authorities represented the Congress at this conference on ‘Governance and Quality Education’. He reiterated that the local and regional authorities have ever-increasing responsibilities in respect of not just the quality of, and access to, education in all its forms but also integration into working life. He insisted on the need to put back on the European political agenda the question of local and regional authorities’ responsibilities in this sphere.

- **Cooperation between the EU Committee of the Regions and the Congress (Brussels, 30 May 2013)**

A bilateral meeting between Herwig van Staa, President of the Congress and Ramón Luis Valcárcel Siso, President of the Committee of the Regions of the European Union (CoR) in the presence of the secretary generals of the two institutions, focused on priority areas for cooperation such as multi-level governance, fighting corruption and the impact of the economic and financial crisis on local democracy as well as on local and regional authorities’ possibilities for developing and implementing counteracting policies. The presidents also examined the forthcoming events of common interest, in particular, the 20th anniversary of the two institutions which will coincide in 2014.

- **Emperor Maximilian Prize awarded to Karl-Heinz Lambertz (Innsbruck, 11 June 2013)**

This Prize has been awarded to Karl-Heinz LAMBERTZ (Belgium, SOC), Chair of the Congress' Governance Committee and Prime Minister of the German-Speaking Community of Belgium, for his work to promote local and regional democracy, and more specifically transborder and inter-regional co-operation, multi-level governance and regional self-government. The prize is attributed by the Land of Tyrol and the City of Innsbruck (Austria) to personalities or institutions for their achievements in regional and local politics, with special emphasis on the efforts made to implement the European Charter of Local Self-Government in Council of Europe member states.

- **Adoption of a position of the Current affairs Committee in Turkey (Ankara, 26 June 2013)**

Meeting in the City of Ankara on 26 June 2013, the Current Affairs Committee of the Congress adopted a Common position on the current situation in Turkey entitled "Exploring new paths to a renewed dialogue". The Committee considered disproportionate the response of the Turkish authorities against demonstrators condemned the brutal operations of law enforcement, while opposing all forms of violence in this context, and called for the full implementation of the fundamental right to freedom of expression. It expressed the hope that this internal conflict will be solved in a peaceful manner and that the Turkish society continues to advance on the path of democracy, affirming its European orientation as well as the respect of civil rights and diversity.

- **Statement of the Congress Monitoring Committee on the current political situation in Georgia (Tbilissi, 3 July 2013)**

Following the meeting of the Congress Monitoring Committee, the President of the Committee Lars O Molin, expressed his committee's concern regarding the current political situation in Georgia highlighting that the legal proceedings instituted against local elected representatives was a cause for deep concern.

- **Meeting with the new Permanent Representative of Austria (Strasbourg, 17 September 2013)**

The President of the Congress and the Head of the Austrian delegation to the Congress, Gudrun Mosler-Törnström (R, SOC) discussed the programme of Austria's Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (mid-November 2013 to May 2014) with the new Permanent Representative of Austria, Ambassador Rudolf Lennkh. (see under the section "Austrian presidency")

- **Exchange of views of the President with the Committee of Ministers (Strasbourg, 18 September 2013)**

During his exchange of views with the Committee of Ministers on 18 September 2013 President van Staa emphasised that the Congress' work is continuously being re-oriented to rest on three pillars – in addition to its political consultative work, procedures and effectiveness of the monitoring and election observation; post-monitoring and post-election observation dialogue and co-operation activities based on the results of our monitoring and post-monitoring dialogue (see 2. Cooperation within the Council of Europe)

- **Declaration of the Bureau of the Congress on the Lampedusa tragedy (Strasbourg, 31 October 2013)**

The Bureau of the Congress adopted a declaration on "Emergency in the Mediterranean: the tragedy of Lampedusa" on 31 October 2013, following a motion submitted by twenty-one Congress members. It asks governments to support a change in the legislation relating to immigration and the right of asylum in order to promote the lawful entry, safety, reception and integration of migrants.

- **Conference of Ministers responsible for Media and Information Society (Belgrade, 7 November 2013)**

Nataliya Romanova, President of the Chamber of Regions represented the Congress at this conference on Freedom of Expression and Democracy in the Digital Age. She reiterated that local and regional authorities have an increasing responsibility for upholding the freedom of expression in their communities – including both by maintaining public service media and by developing and supporting non-profit community media. She highlighted that European institutions, national governments and parliaments, as well as local and regional authorities must act in concert to make sure that the media have freedom and means to play fully their role in democratic development. Congress Secretary General informed the participants that the Congress Current Affairs Committee will discuss a draft report prepared by Johan van den Hout, (The Netherlands, SOC,) on ‘the role of regional media as a tool for building participatory democracy’, to which the representatives of local and regional media are invited to contribute.

- **World Forum for Democracy 2013 (Strasbourg, 27-29 November 2013)**

The Congress participated in several thematic workshops (LAB) as part of the World Forum for Democracy: Connecting institutions and citizens in the digital age. The Congress contributions were hinged on the following themes: Alternatives to representative democracy – Towards democracy 2.0 – Governing with the citizens. Tracey Simpson-Laing (United Kingdom, SOC), Councillor of the City of York and member of the Congress, spoke in LAB 2 “Online petitions and campaigning” and Andreas Kiefer, Secretary General of the Congress, moderated LAB 8 “Virtual Agora”. Andris Jaunsleinis (Latvia, ILDG), municipal councillor of Ventspils and head of the Latvian delegation to the Congress spoke in LAB 14 “Participatory budgeting”, aimed. In addition, the rapporteurs of LAB 12 “Put your money where your heart is” and LAB 15 “Digital local democracy” were, respectively, Andrée Buchmann (France, SOC), Regional Councillor of Alsace and member of the Congress and Clemens Lammerskitten (Germany, EPP/CCE), Member of the Niedersachsen Parliament and Vice-President of the Congress. They presented the plenary session with the conclusions of these two labs whose discussions on the tools and the methods for enhancing citizen participation.

## **b. The European Charter of self-government**

- **Signature of the Charter by San Marino (Strasbourg, 16 May 2013)**

With the signature of the European Charter of Local Self-Government by the Foreign Affairs Minister of the Republic of San Marino, Pasquale Valentini, all 47 member states of the Council of Europe are now covered by this international treaty. Jean-Claude Frécon (France, SOC), President of the Chamber of Local Authorities of the Congress stated that the application of the Charter over 100% of European territory was indeed one of the major objectives of the Congress.

- **Ratification of the Additional Protocol to the Charter by Armenia (Strasbourg, 13 May 2013)**

On 13 May 2013 Armenia ratified the Additional Protocol on the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority.

- **Annual meeting of the Group of Independent Experts on the European Charter of Local Self-Government (Strasbourg, 19-20 September 2013)**

During its meeting, the Group of Independent Experts on the European Charter of Local Self-Government elected a new Chair, Prof. Angel-Manuel Moreno Molina (Spain) and two new Vice-Chairs: Prof. Dr. Anna Gamper (Austria) and Dr. Zoltan Szente (Hungary). The group examined the concept of ‘sufficient resources’ in the Charter, the right for local authorities to be consulted by other levels of government, criteria for standing in local and regional elections and the situation of regions and territories with special status in Europe, among other topics. The group also held an in-depth exchange on the development of the monitoring of the application of the Charter in member states and on transversal issues identified in monitoring missions.

- **Conference of “European Charter of Local Self-Government: 15 years of the ratification by Russia” (Moscow, 17 October 2013)**

President Herwig van Staa stressed that by ratifying the Charter, Russia committed itself to building governance based on democratic values and standards that apply to all levels – national, regional and local, recognising that democracy cannot be effective without efficient local democracy. He highlighted that since the Charter's ratification, Russia made significant progress in the decentralisation of power, the division of competences between different tiers of government and the transfer of responsibilities to grassroots level.

- **Conference on “The role of local self-government in the development of the territory: Russian and European experience” (Saint- Petersburg, 18 October 2013)**

Knud Andersen (Denmark, ILDG) Congress Rapporteur on the Russian Federation represented the Congress in this conference. He highlighted the necessity for national governments implementing the European Charter of Local Self-Government, in order to provide local self-government with a legal framework, competences and means for the development of the territory. He insisted that it is equally important that local self-government properly plays its crucial role in this process through good local governance – a kind of governance that is citizen-oriented, responsible, accountable and efficient, as well as an ethical governance, based on transparency and the fight against corruption and the abuse of power.

- **San Marino ratifies the Charter (Strasbourg, 29 October 2013)**

At a ceremony held during the 25th Session of the Congress, Giancarlo Venturini, Minister for Home Affairs, Civil Service, Justice and Relations with Municipal Councils of San Marino, in the presence of Council of Europe Secretary General deposited the instruments of ratification of the Charter, which was approved by the San Marino Parliament on 23 October last. With this ratification, all 47 member states of the Council of Europe are now covered by this international treaty.

- **25 years of the Charter (Strasbourg, 30 October 2013)**

The Charter establishing the role of local government as the first level where democracy is exercised came into force on 1 September 1988. The 25 years of the Charter was celebrated with a ceremony during the 25th Session of the Congress (see 3. Activities of the Congress bodies).

- **Serbia accepts other provisions of the European Charter of Self-Government (Belgrade, 8 November 2013)**

During this meeting with State Secretary Radoje Savićević in the Serbian Ministry of Regional Development and Local Self-Government as well as Assistant Ministers Nataša Dragojlović (Decentralisation) and Saša Mogić (Local self-government), Andreas Kiefer welcomed the willingness of the Serbian Government to ratify articles of the Charter which were not accepted at the time of the adherence to this text. Their ratification will lead to further developments in law.

- **Conference on "1953–1988–2013: Decentralisation at a crossroads" (Strasbourg, 26 November 2013)**

The Congress and the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) co-organised a conference, held on the eve of the World Forum for Democracy 2013. To mark the 60th anniversary of the adoption by the CEMR of the European Charter of Municipal Liberties (1953) and the 25th anniversary of the entry into force of the European Charter of Local Self-Government of the Council of Europe (1988), the conference aimed to review the progress achieved over the last 60 years with respect to local democracy and self-government, notably through the implementation of the two Charters. It also focused on recent administrative and territorial reforms in Europe, examines the concerns of local governments on recentralisation trends and looked at the future prospects for strengthening local democracy in Europe. President van Staa welcomed the fact that this year all Council of Europe member states have ratified the European Charter of Local Self-Government, this shows the unanimous recognition, by all European governments, that local democracy is the cornerstone of the democratic system. Jean-Claude Frécon, President of the Chamber of Local authorities highlighted that the principles enshrined in the Charter are valuable advances which must not be called into question, regardless of the economic situation and the difficulties our governments face in dealing with it, these principles being all fundamental rights of local authorities to be applied



unconditionally. He underlined the possibility of adapting the text of the Charter with additional provisions, for instance to expand participatory democracy against the background of the crisis currently affecting representative democracy.

### **c. The Chairmanships of the Committee of Ministers**

#### **Armenian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers (May- November 2013)**

- **Bureau meeting and meeting with the representatives of the Armenian government (Yerevan, 18 June 2013)**

To mark Armenia's Chairmanship, the Bureau of the Congress had in Yerevan, Armenia an exchange of views with Armenian representatives of the government and Armen Gevorgyan, Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Territorial Administration of Armenia. In this context, the President of the Congress met Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan and the President of the Armenian National Assembly Hovik Abrahamyan.

- **Conference on Participatory Democracy at Local Level (Yerevan, 19 June 2013)**

The conference was organised under the Armenian Chairmanship in close co-operation with the Congress. It addressed in particular the current situation in member states, the role of participatory democracy in improving the efficiency of local authorities and the ways of strengthening participatory democracy at local level. The President of the Congress reiterated that the issue of participation is included in the priorities of the Congress for 2013-2016 because the quality of democracy depends on citizen participation in democratic processes. Armen Gevorgyan highlighted that the Armenian Chairmanship accorded a special place to the local democracy area, because the local democracy is the principal component for the democratic development of society.

- **Meeting 2013 on the religious dimension of intercultural dialogue (Yerevan, 2 September 2013)**

John Warmisham (UK, Soc), Congress Vice-President, represented the Congress at the Meeting 2013 of the Council of Europe on "Freedom of religion in today's world: challenges and guarantees". This event gathered high-level religious leaders of different confessions, representatives of non-religious convictions, public authorities, civil society, human rights experts and media specialists. Discussions were organised around three thematic panels : "Freedom of religion, conscience and thought as a fundamental human right in contemporary societies"; "Protection of persons belonging to religious minorities, believers and non-believers and their contribution to the fight against intolerance, discrimination and hate speech with regard to freedom of religion"; and "Avenues for future action within and beyond Europe: youth education and awareness-raising on religion and beliefs, dialogue and cooperation among and with religious and non-religious representatives". John Warmisham reiterated that it is important is changing the mental constructs and perceptions of the religious values of others, building a relationship of dialogue and co-operation between religious communities as well as between believers and non-believers.

- **International Conference of Capital cities (Yerevan, 11 October 2013)**

John Warmisham reiterated that as the largest urban centers in most countries in Europe, capital cities have special responsibilities in ensuring the quality of life of their residents. In fact, from the quality of public services to civil participation, from crime prevention to green technologies and technological innovation, public authorities in capital cities today face challenges unparalleled in history and they must have sufficient capacity to make their cities citizen-friendly, inclusive, sustainable and knowledge-driven. In conclusions, John Warmisham highlighted that capital cities clearly need a special regulatory framework which also requires effective dialogue between all levels of government, combined with clearly defined responsibilities. He also pointed to the crucial importance of ethical and transparent governance. The next conference of capital cities should take place in Sarajevo under the chairmanship of Bosnia and Herzegovina, between May and November 2015;

## **The Austrian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers (November 2013-May 2014)**

- **Meeting with the new Permanent Representative of Austria (Strasbourg, 17 September 2013)**

The President of the Congress and the Head of the Austrian delegation to the Congress, Gudrun Mosler-Törnström (Austria, SOC) discussed the programme of Austria's Chairmanship (mid-November 2013 to May 2014) with the new Permanent Representative of Austria, Ambassador Rudolf Lennkh. They also examined some of the Congress's forthcoming activities, including a major conference on the fight against corruption at local level (May 2014, Innsbruck), and a seminar regarding the reduction of unemployment through educational projects in Europe's regions (April 2014, Carinthia). Further events endorsed by the Congress – including a conference on citizen participation and new media at the grassroots level and a symposium on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of both the Congress and the Committee of the Regions - are currently under consideration. An exhibition on Austrian regions will be organised at the 26th Session of the Congress (March 2014).

- **Governance at local level among the priorities of the Austrian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers (Strasbourg, 14 November 2013)**

During the meeting when Armenia has handed over the Chairmanship to Austria, Jean-Claude Frécon, President of the Chamber of Local Authorities of the Congress, expressed his satisfaction that the quality of democracy and governance at the grassroots level continues to figure on the agenda of the Austrian Chairmanship, after those of Andorra and Armenia. The priorities presented by Austria emphasize the role of the Congress as a “political assembly which promotes and strengthens local and regional democracy, inter-territorial and cross-border co-operation, as well as active citizenship and social inclusion in towns and regions. The commitment of elected representatives to ethical conduct and the fight against corruption at local and regional level are of topical interest in this respect.

## **2. Cooperation within the Council of Europe**

The Congress continued to foster increased dialogue and close co-operation with its institutional partners within the Council of Europe.

### **a. The intergovernmental sector**

#### **i. Committee of Ministers**

In the framework of the political dialogue with the Committee of Ministers, the President of the Congress and its Secretary General hold several annual exchange of views with the Deputies and participate in ministerial sessions.

In his communication on 3 April 2013, the Secretary General of the Congress, presented the Congress activities since November 2012, which include, among others the thematic debates of the 24th session, placed under the general theme of the crisis, several monitoring visits to member states, local election observation missions, the launching of the first pilot activities of the European Alliance of Cities and Regions for Roma Inclusion, as well as the launching of an interactive online platform to demonstrate good local and regional practices in combating the sexual violence against children and the preparation of the 2013 European Local Democracy Week. He also highlighted the adoption of the Resolution on the post-monitoring of local and regional democracy and recalled that the Congress intends to increase the follow up of the implementation of its recommendations by the Member states, in stepping up political dialogue and taking actively part in the Council Europe action plans and cooperation programmes.

During his exchange of views with the Committee of Ministers on 18 September 2013 the Congress President emphasised that the Congress' work is continuously being re-oriented to rest on three pillars – in addition to its political consultative work, post-monitoring and post-election observation dialogue to address the existing problems and help with the implementation of our recommendations; and carrying out co-operation activities based on the results of our monitoring and post-monitoring dialogue. The focus is on creating a 'virtuous cycle' of monitoring – post-monitoring – co-operation activities to make the work of the Congress ever more efficient,

On 16 May 2013 during the handover of the Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of Albania to Armenia and on 14 November 2013 at the handover of the Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of Armenia to Austria, Jean-Claude Frécon, President of the Chamber of Local Authorities and the Secretary General represented the Congress in the ministerial meetings.

The Congress is also represented in the Committee of Ministers' Rapporteur groups, such as the GR-DEM, the GR-EXT, the GR-H and the GR-SOC by its Secretary General or Secretariat.

It is represented in other Steering Committees and Committees of Experts of the Council of Europe - including the Steering Committee on Human Rights (CDDH), the European Steering Committee on Youth (CDEJ), the Steering Committee on cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue (CDDI), the European Committee for social cohesion (CDCS), the Ad hoc Committee of Experts on Roma Issues (CAHROM) and the Group of Specialists on child-friendly justice (CJ-S-CH) - through its thematic rapporteurs or its Secretariat.

#### **i. Action Plans**

The Congress has included projects on local and regional democracy in the Council of Europe action plans for Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine as well as activities in Belarus and Kosovo<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> \* All reference to Kosovo in this text, whether to the territory, institutions or population, shall be understood in full compliance with Resolution 1244 of the Security Council of the United Nations and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo \*

It is also contributing to the new Council of Europe policy towards neighbouring regions and has established relations with Morocco and Tunisia (see under section 6.).

## **ii. European Committee for Local and Regional Democracy (CDLR)**

The Secretariats of the Congress and the CDLR agreed to cooperate on the responses of local and regional authorities to the economic crisis. The Committee of current affairs of the Congress has prepared a report on this subject which was discussed at the October 2013 session.

On 31 May 2013, Karl-Heinz Lambertz (Belgium, SOC), Chair of the Governance Committee, met with the CDLR Bureau in Brussels to discuss for cooperation between the CDLR and the Congress. They agreed to focus cooperation on responses to the economic downturn, citizen participation, human rights at local level and crossborder cooperation. Raymond Svensson (Sweden ILDG), member of the Current Affairs Committee, attended the CDLR seminar on Good Governance on 17 June 2013 in Strasbourg. Breda Pecan (Slovenia, SOC), Congress rapporteur on transfrontier cooperation, attended the CDLR seminar on this issue on 18-19 October 2013 in Gorizia (Italy) and Nova Gorica (Slovenia).

The CDLR also participated in the 18 June 2013 Yerevan seminar on citizen participation organised by the Congress in the context of the Armenian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers.

## **iii. Youth Department**

- **Seminar on the role of local youth participation in the framework of the Enter! project (Strasbourg, 13-15 November 2013)**

The Youth Department of the Council of Europe in co-operation with the Congress and within the frame of the Enter! Project (to promote access to social rights for all young people) organised a seminar on “Local youth participation and access to social rights for all young people: which ways forward? The seminar brought together youth workers and youth leaders, local decision-makers and researchers to identify strategies and ways to support youth participation at the local level as a means of ensuring access to social rights for all young people, in particular of those exposed to social exclusion, discrimination and violence. Congress members Samira ALIYEVA, (Azerbaijan, SOC), Sari JANATUINEN, (Finland, SOC), and Alison COOK, (United Kingdom, ECR) participated in this seminar.

## **b. The Parliamentary Assembly**

The Congress has regular exchanges with the Parliamentary Assembly in areas of common interest in order to develop synergies and increase co-operation with the respective Secretariats and rapporteurs, notably in the area of monitoring and the implementation of the ONE in FIVE Campaign.

A joint declaration by the Presidents of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress for a reinforced co-operation between all levels of government facing economic crisis was adopted during the 25<sup>th</sup> Congress Session on 29 October 2013. It calls upon the national and regional governments and parliaments of all Council of Europe member states to make the issue of healthy and sustainable local and regional budgets a matter of national priority. This declaration also confirms the commitment of both bodies to cooperate “so as to ensure that the voice of “Greater Europe” be heard when it comes to preserving the capacity of action of local and regional authorities, which are the democratic institutions closest to the citizens and thus represent the foundations of European democracy.”

The President of the Parliamentary Assembly, Jean-Claude Mignon addressed the members of the Congress during the 25<sup>th</sup> Session. (see C. Activities of the Congress bodies)

### **c. The Commissioner for Human Rights**

The Commissioner for Human Rights follows the work of the Congress on the implementation of human rights at the local level and awareness raising of local and regional authorities in this regard. It will contribute to the third report of the Monitoring Committee on best practices in the Council of Europe and other continents, by communicating an opinion on the draft report which will be submitted for information to the Monitoring Committee at its next meeting in February.

The Commissioner has also been invited to address the Congress at the next session in March 2014.

### **d. The European Commission for Democracy through Law (The Venice Commission)**

The Congress has an outstanding level of co-operation with the Venice Commission, particularly in the fields of election observation and the monitoring of the Charter, as well as the programmes of co-operation with neighbouring regions.

Co-operation between the Venice Commission, the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress in electoral matters mainly occurs by means of the Council for Democratic Elections (CDE). The principles found in the Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters, produced by the CDE, are taken into account in Congress reports and recommendations on electoral matters. Lars O. Molin (Sweden, EPP/CCE) and Gudrun Mosler-Törnström (Austria, SOC) are the Congress institutional representatives to the CDE. On 15 December, Mr Molin also took part in the meeting of the European Council for Democratic Elections and presented the Congress' recent and future work in the electoral field.

The Congress has also strengthened its co-operation with the Venice Commission on issues of local and regional democracy. Its opinions are also taken into account by Congress rapporteurs during their visits and in recommendations adopted by the Congress. Furthermore, Lars O. Molin, Chair of the Monitoring Committee, regularly represents the Congress at meetings of the Venice Commission. M. Molin participated in the 96th plenary session of the Venice Commission on 11 October 2013. He presented the main developments in the Congress's work, in particular the consolidation of monitoring, election observation and follow-up activities as well as the Congress's post-monitoring dialogue and needs-oriented co-operation programmes with Council of Europe member states.

The institutional co-operation activities with Morocco and Tunisia are conducted in close collaboration with the Venice Commission. The Congress has participated in several hearings and meetings of the Venice Commission with the National Constituent Assembly (ANC) of Tunisia on the draft Constitution. Thus, the comments of Congress on Chapter VII of the final draft of the new Tunisian constitution on local authorities – drafted by Christian Behrendt, Professor at the University of Liège, Belgium - have been included in the official comments of the Committee Venice, published July 17, 2013.

The Commission has also been involved in the discussions held by the Congress with the Moroccan Parliament on the draft law on advanced regionalisation (see under section 6. Cooperation activities)

### **e. The Special Representative of the Secretary General for Roma Inclusion**

Since the Summit of Mayors on Roma in September 2011, the Congress has been working in close co-operation with the Special Representative to establish a co-operation framework for cities and regions willing to promote inclusive policies for Roma, the European Alliance for Cities and Regions for Roma Inclusion. The Congress and the special Representative have launched the ROMACT project with the financial support of the European Commission (see under section 5. Thematic activities).

### **3. Activities of the Congress bodies**

#### **a. Meetings of the Bureau**

- **Strasbourg (30 avril 2013)**

Following the communications of the President and the Secretary General of the Congress, and after the reports of the Presidents of the Chambers, the Bureau discussed the composition of national delegations, in particular those of Russia and Ukraine, the follow-up to the 24th Session and the preparation of the 25th Session as well as the activities of the committees. It heard an oral report on the local elections in "The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" and was informed of the latest developments in the field of the Congress's co-operation programmes. The Secretary-General summarized the highlights of his discussion of 3 April 2013 with the Ministers' Deputies.

- **Yerevan (18 June 2013)**

To mark Armenia's Chairmanship of the Committee of Minister, the Bureau of the Congress held its meeting in Yerevan. Bureau members exchanged views with representatives of Armenian government among them Armen Gevorgyan, Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Territorial Administration of Armenia and discussed the agenda of the 25th Session of the Congress, activities of the Congress committees, as well as the latest developments in local and regional democracy. With respect to the participation of members in the three committees, the Bureau agreed to consider case by case individual requests from delegations with no official distribution of seats. Among the other items on the agenda were co-operation activities, the approval of a new administrative rule on the use of the Congress visual identity and the online material, the cooperation activities, the Alliance of Cities and Regions for Roma Inclusion, the observation of elections of the Assembly (Avagani) of Yerevan in Armenia (5 May 2013) and the contribution of the Congress to the priorities of the chairmanships of the Committee of Ministers as well as the decision to organize a joint session of the Governance Committee of the Congress and the CIVEX of the Committee of the Regions in 2014 in order to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the two institutions.

- **Strasbourg (17 September 2013)**

During this meeting, Johan van den HOUT (Netherlands, SOC) was appointed Congress spokesperson on Children and Jos WIENEN (Netherlands, EPP/CCE) spokesperson on the observation of local and regional elections. Among the other topics on the agenda were the 25th Session, the 2013 budget, as well as the latest developments relating to cooperation activities and activities in the sphere of Roma. The participants also discusses the reports on the observation of local elections in 'the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia' (24 March 2013) and the Yerevan Assembly elections in Armenia (5 May 2013) as well as joint statements on the current political situations in Turkey and in Georgia and the health consequences of asbestos. They also prepared Congress contribution to the World Forum for Democracy (Strasbourg, 27-29 November).

- **Strasbourg (28 and 31 October 2013)**

The Bureau of the Congress met on the eve of and during the 25th session. After the Communications from the President and the Secretary General of the Congress, as well as the Presidents of the Chambers, it was informed that in the absence of an invitation from an appropriate authority or the European Union, the Congress would not observe local elections in Kosovo<sup>2</sup>. It also heard a report on the mission of the Presidents of the Chambers to Belarus, concerning the preparation of a seminar on the European Charter of Local Self-Government in Minsk. The Bureau was informed about the latest developments in the Congress and Council of Europe's co-operation activities, and took note of the Congress' most recent activities in favour of the inclusion of Roma, including the launching of the ROMACT programme in several countries. It finally adopted a declaration on "Emergency in the Mediterranean: the tragedy of Lampedusa", following a proposition

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<sup>2</sup> \* All reference to Kosovo in this text, whether to the territory, institutions or population, shall be understood in full compliance with Resolution 1244 of the Security Council of the United Nations and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo \*

for a resolution and recommendation distributed during the 25th session. The Declaration asks governments to support a change in the legislation relating to immigration and the right of asylum in order to promote the lawful entry, safety, reception and integration of migrants.

## **b. Plenary sessions**

### **• 25th Session (Strasbourg, 28-31 October 2013)**

The Congress has decided to place its two annual sessions in 2013 (March and October) under the general theme "Europe in crisis – the challenges for local and regional democracy". The aim is to offer a platform for exchanges between European local and regional elected representatives on ways of addressing not only the financial crisis but also the crisis of confidence in the democratic process.

Apart from a specific debate on "Local and regional authorities responding to the economic crisis", other debates included "Integration through self-employment: promoting migrant entrepreneurship in European municipalities", "Migrants' access to regional labour markets" and "Regionalisation and devolution in Europe in a context of economic crisis – recent developments". In this context, the Presidents of the Parliamentary Assembly and of the Congress signed a joint declaration on "Facing the economic crisis: recovery requires reinforced co-operation between all levels of government".

The session also included a special event concerning the European Charter of Local Self-Government, which now covers, with the ratification by San Marino, all 47 member states of the Council of Europe. "This historic day marks the end of a long process to establish a harmonized legislative space for European territorial democracy" stated Giancarlo Venturini, Minister for Home Affairs, Civil Service, Justice and Relations with Municipal Councils of San Marino, who underlined that this crucial stage 25 years on from the entry into force of the Charter, confirmed the unanimous recognition by governments of local democracy as the cornerstone of the democratic system.

Monitoring reports concerning Ireland, Hungary, Ukraine, Albania and Denmark were also discussed and recommendations adopted. A report on the election of the members of the Avagani (Assembly) of the city of Yerevan and another on the local elections in "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" were discussed and resolutions and recommendations adopted. Three revised resolutions on the procedures of monitoring of local and regional democracy and election observation as well as on the procedure on post-monitoring and post-election observation were also adopted.

Congress members also debated "Prospects for effective transfrontier co-operation in Europe", "Regions and territories with special status in Europe" and ways of "fighting political extremism at local and regional level".

The 4th Congress Dosta! Prize for municipalities was awarded to the city of Obrnice (Czech Republic), the city of Heraklion (Greece), and the regional authority of Kocaeli (Turkey) for innovative municipal projects promoting Roma integration, combating discrimination against Roma, and raising awareness of Roma culture and rights

Prominent speakers invited to the session included Armen Gevorgyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Territorial Administration of Armenia, Liviu Nicolae Dragnea, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Administration and Regional Development of Romania, Jose Herrera, Parliamentary Secretary for Culture and Local Government of Malta, Jean-Claude Mignon, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, and Thorbjørn Jagland, Secretary General of the Council of Europe.

**Armen Gevorgyan**, representing the Armenian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe stressed the importance of Congress' missions, in particular in the context of the current economic crisis. He reiterated that the Congress, the Committee of Ministers and the other institutions of this Organisation have the duty to ensure that the fundamental rights of our citizens are protected. He stressed that the Committee of Ministers welcomes the constant effort of the Congress to support its priorities.

**Liviu Nicolae Dragnea** presented the process of regionalisation under way in his country and the reforms to local and regional administration implemented by his government. He welcomed the constant support of the Council of Europe since Romania's accession 20 years ago and he stressed that an exemplary co-operation is put in place today to guide the country in its process of regionalization.

**José Herrera** identified the main objectives of the Maltese government in the field of local government since the last recommendation of the Congress in 2011: less bureaucracy, better governance, wider citizen participation, more consultation and lowering the voting age in local council elections to 16. He also highlighted the importance of the creation of a new platform for young citizens to give them an opportunity to participate in and to contest local elections. He underlined his government's commitment to improving local democracy in an accountable and transparent manner in Malta.

**Jean-Claude Mignon**, expressed his satisfaction with the co-signing of the Joint Declaration with the President of Congress, noting that a coordinated joint action at national, regional and local level was needed to provide an appropriate response to the challenges posed by financial and economic crisis. He recalled that members of the PACE and Congress derive their legitimacy from the people and play a key role in the organization, everyone to his level and according to his abilities, working to advance democracy and defend European values and standards.

**Thorbjørn Jagland** welcomed the measures taken by the Congress to broaden the political dialogue with member states at national, local and regional levels, and to develop post-monitoring dialogue in order to work on the issues raised in the recommendations and assist the authorities in implementing them. The Secretary General also encouraged the development of the Congress' co-operation programmes and a greater involvement of the Congress in specific action plans for each country.

## **c. The Chambers**

### **• The Chamber of Local Authorities**

At its session on 30 October 2013, the Chamber of Local Authorities adopted reports on local democracy in Ireland, migrant entrepreneurship and local elections in Yerevan and in the "The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia". In his communication to the Chamber, President Jean-Claude FRECON spoke of his goal to achieve "100 % of the Charter across 100 % of the European territory". Expressing his satisfaction that the Charter had now been ratified by all 47 member states, he declared that the next aim of the Congress would be, to encourage all members to ratify all the Charter's provisions through a process of political dialogue, post-monitoring and post-election recommendations.

With regard to the situation of local democracy in Ireland, Congress rapporteurs Andris Jaunsleinis (Latvia, ILDG) and Merita Jegeni Yildiz (Turkey, EPP/CCE) welcomed the fact that Ireland had made substantial changes since the last monitoring report in 2001 (see the section monitoring). Addressing the Chamber, Irish Minister of State Fergus O'Dowd welcomed the report as "providing additional underpinning to the reform agenda that we are implementing and I hope the Congress and, more generally, the Council of Europe will continue to support us in this matter".

The report on migrant integration through entrepreneurship and access to employment advocates further support for migrant entrepreneurship and access to the labour market. The rapporteurs regard these questions as being crucial for preserving and enhancing social cohesion through more effective policies for the integration of migrants, and as a major priority for the 47 Council of Europe member states in the context of the economic crisis.

Following its mission to observe the election of the members of the Avagani (Assembly of Aldermen), of the city of Yerevan, Armenia, on 5 May 2013, the Chamber adopted a recommendation and resolution, noting that the new Electoral Code of Armenia had contributed to a calm and technically well-prepared vote (see the section on election observation).



The Chamber also adopted a recommendation and resolution on the municipal elections of 24 March 2013 in "The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", observing that the elections were well-prepared (see the section on election observation).

The Bureau of the Chamber, meeting in April, June, September, October and November, examined several complaints with regard to the application of the European Charter of Local-Self Government in Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia and Moldova. The President of the Chamber talked with the authorities of Belarus concerning the possibility of organising a seminar on the European Charter of Local Self-Government in Minsk in 2014.

- **The Chamber of regions**

During the 25th session, the Chamber adopted a Resolution and a Recommendation on "Regions with special status". These regions with special status represent models that can be successfully considered in countries experiencing regional nationalism drifts. The adopted texts will be a contribution to the preparation of the Chamber's Report on regionalisation and devolution.

The Resolution and Recommendation on "Migrants access to regional labour markets", adopted during the same session, contain clear guidelines for regions wishing to tackle migrants' employment challenges. As a concrete initiative, an operational provision of the resolution suggests regions set up, regional offices to facilitate migrants' access to employment, using the existing resources.

The Chamber also held a debate on "Regionalisation and devolution in Europe". The discussion was centred on: the best way of distributing powers and resources, - making the best possible use of public money - ,enhancing citizens participation in the decision-making process and on the origins of regional nationalism trends and their possible consequences.

The Chamber of Regions was represented in several events of interest for the European regions:

- the Conference on "Fiscal Decentralisation in the Eastern Partnership – Challenges and Opportunities", Brussels (Belgium), on 14 May 2013, event co-organised by the Congress, the Committee of the Regions and the Civil Society Forum.
- the 3rd Summit on "Regions and the Economic crisis" and General Assembly of the Assembly of European Regions (AER) held in Paris on 18 May.
- the VI Nevsky International Ecological Congress "Environmental Awareness as a Tool of Environmental Solutions", held in St-Petersburg (Russian Federation), on 21-22 May 2013.
- the Seminar, organised by the CIVEX Commission of the Committee of the Regions, on "Multi-level governance in regional practice ", in Bolzano (Italy), 8 July 2013,
- the 4th Black Sea Summit of the Assembly of European Regions, held on 4 October 2013 in Rize, Turkey.
- the General Assembly of the Conference of European Regional Legislative Assemblies (CALRE), that took place in Brussels on 21-22 October 2013;
- the International Conference "Ways to increase the role of regional and local authorities in social and economic development of European and CIS Nations", on 25 October 2013, in Saint-Petersburg.

Nataliya Romanova, President of the Chamber of Regions of the Congress highlighted in her communication that the Chamber of Regions should pay particular attention to promote the regionalisation process, help regions improve economic effectiveness via good governance methods and consider the origin and consequences of the recent trends in regional nationalism.

## **d. The Committees**

### **i The Monitoring Committee**

The Committee is responsible for monitoring the application of the European Charter of local self-government and following institutional developments in Europe's regions, preparing reports on the situation of local and regional democracy in the countries that have ratified the Charter and studying specific issues related to local and regional democracy in member states. Lars O. Molin (Sweden, L, EPP/CCE) is the Chair of the Committee.

The Monitoring Committee met on 2 July 2013 in Tbilisi (Georgia) and adopted on this occasion the reports on local and regional democracy in Hungary, Georgia, Albania, Ukraine and Denmark (see point 4 below). The committee considered allegations of non-compliance with the Charter for local authorities in Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Belgium and took note of information on recent developments concerning local authorities of Georgia.

The Committee continued its work programme during another meeting, on 30 October, on the sidelines of the Congress session and has focused its work on the second edition of the training seminar for rapporteurs which was to analyse the detailed provisions of the European Charter of Local Self-Government. It also examined complaints by representatives of "freguesias" (parishes) in Portugal and from councillors of Ireland.

The Committee has continued its post-monitoring in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Azerbaijan and Portugal. Preparatory work for a post-monitoring procedure is underway for Georgia and Ukraine. The 2014 work programme adopted by the Committee includes six follow-up visits (Belgium, France, Greece, Norway, Poland, Russian Federation) and a post-monitoring programme for Azerbaijan, Portugal, Bosnia - Herzegovina, Georgia and Ukraine. The Committee may, however, be required to organise one or two fact-finding missions if it receives requests in this regard during the year.

The next meetings of the Monitoring Committee scheduled for 2014 will be held respectively on 19 February in Nicosia (Cyprus) and 2 July in Ulyanovsk (Russian Federation). In February, the Commission will consider draft reports on local and regional democracy in the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Sweden and Armenia.

The work of the Committee on the issue of implementation of human rights at the local level will continue on this occasion with a seminar on the adoption of the third thematic report on human rights. This report specifically mentions good practice at local level in the member states of the Council of Europe and on other continents. This work will lead to the drafting of a handbook for local elected representatives which should be available during 2014.

### **ii. The Governance Committee**

The Committee is responsible for affairs such as governance, public finance, cross-border and interregional co-operation and e-democracy, as well as co-operation with the European Committee of Local and Regional Democracy (CDLR). Karl-Heinz Lambertz (Belgium, SOC) is the Chair of the Committee.

At its meeting in Strasbourg on 3 June 2013, the Governance Committee approved a preliminary draft report, resolution and recommendation on "Regions and territories with a special status in Europe", as well as, a preliminary draft report and resolution on "Prospects for transfrontier cooperation in Europe". These texts were subsequently adopted by the Congress during the 25th session in October 2013.

At its June meeting, the Committee was also updated on the progress of reports currently being prepared by its rapporteurs on: "Criteria for standing for local and regional elections"; "Inter-regional co-operation"; the "Concept of adequate financial resources in the European Charter of Local Self-Government"; "Trends in regionalism in Council of Europe member states", and the "Membership of the Congress and its Chambers". The Committee discussed the follow-up to its work on citizen participation and the right of local authorities to be consulted by other levels of government.

The Committee heard a report by the Chair and the Secretary General of the Congress on their meeting with a delegation from the Bureau of the European Committee on Local and Regional Democracy (CDLR) in Brussels on 31 May 2013, and on Congress participation in future CDLR seminars.

At its meeting during the 25th session, the Committee was updated on on-going work and adopted a common position to support a Macro-regional strategy for the Alps. The Committee also appointed rapporteurs for a report on the conditions of office of local and regional elected representatives and discussed the preparation of a seminar on e-democracy in the margins of the 26th Session of the Congress.

### **iii. The Current Affairs Committee**

Under its mandate, the Committee is responsible for studying the role of local and regional authorities with regard to the major challenges of our society; preparing work on thematic issues such as social cohesion, sustainable development, education, culture and intercultural dialogue from the point of view of the Council of Europe's core values; and proposing action to respond to existing or emerging problems as well as to emergencies at local and regional levels. Farid Mukhametshin (Russian Federation, ILGD) is the Chair of the Committee.

At its meeting of 26 June 2013 in Ankara, the Committee approved the reports on the impact of the crisis on local and regional authorities by Rapporteur Barbara Toce (Italy, L, SOC) and Svetlana Orlova, (Russian Federation, R, EPP/CCE), as well as on migrants' access to regional labour market, by Deirdre McGowan (Ireland, R, ILDG). These reports were submitted for consideration and adoption at the 25<sup>th</sup> Congress Session in October.

The Committee reviewed the progress reports on the situation of LGBT people at local and regional level ( Rapporteur Yoomi Renström , Sweden, R , SOC) as well as on the situation of young Roma (co -rapporteurs Inger Linge , Sweden , R , EPP / CCE and John Warmisham , UK , L, SOC), and held a hearing with representatives of Roma youth organizations. The Committee was informed by Johan van den Hout, Netherlands (R, SOC), on the latest developments regarding the implementation of the Congress' contribution to the ONE in FIVE Campaign to stop sexual violence against children and appointed him its new thematic Spokesperson on children. The Committee also approved a proposal to have Johan van den Hout prepare a report on regional media and democracy and appointed him rapporteur.

The Committee adopted its common positions entitled " The effects of asbestos on health and the need to prohibit its extraction and use" by Barbara Toce , Italy (L, SOC), and "Exploring new avenues for a renewed dialogue" with regard to the situation in Turkey, presented by the First Vice President Angelika Kordfelder , Germany (L, SOC) . Finally, the Commission approved the proposal of Els Ampe , Belgium (R, GILD ) to prepare a new report on the participation of young people in Europe , and has appointed Natalia Pilyus, Russia (L, GILD ), as rapporteur.

The day after its meeting on 27 June, the Committee organized a conference entitled "Changing perceptions of diversity with an effective communication strategy," which focused on the need to change the vision of cultural diversity among the local population through education and intercultural communication. The results of the discussions will form the basis of the report on this subject in preparation by Nawel Rafik- Elmrini , France (L, SOC) .

At its meeting in Strasbourg on 29 October 2013 the Commission approved the report on "Empowerment of Roma youth through participation: design of an effective policy at local and regional levels," presented by Inger Linge , Sweden (R, EPP / CEC) and John Warmisham , UK (L, SOC) , which will be submitted for consideration and adoption at the 26th session of Congress in March 2014.

As part of its review of progress in the preparation of reports on equal opportunities for people with disabilities ( Rapporteur Josef Neumann , Germany , R , SOC) and education and communication diversity ( Rapporteur Nawel Rafik - Elmrini , France , L, SOC), the Commission held an exchange of views with Donata Vivanti , Vice- President of the European Disability Forum , and Elisa Brey , an expert on migration. The Committee was also informed about the preparation of the report on the

partnership with civil society and the implementation of the Code of Good Practice for Civil Participation in the decision-making process by the Rapporteur Raymond Svensson, Sweden (R, GILD).

Johan van den Hout, Netherlands (R, SOC), Congress Thematic Spokesperson on children, presented the latest developments regarding the implementation of the Congress' contribution to the Council of the Europe's ONE in FIVE Campaign, while John Warmisham, United Kingdom (L, SOC), Thematic Spokesperson on Roma Issues, briefed the Committee on the implementation of the European Alliance of Cities and Regions for Roma inclusion.

The Committee held an exchange of views on future work and decided to prepare a report on equality between men and women and poverty, and appointed Jean- Louis Testud, France (L, EPP - CEC) as rapporteur.

The next Committee meetings will be held on 25 March, 2014 in Strasbourg during the 26th session of Congress and on 11 June 2014 in Kazan (Russian Federation).

## **4. Monitoring local and regional democracy**

### **a. The monitoring activities**

One of the main priorities of the Congress is the monitoring of local and regional democracy in its member states based on the commitments they have undertaken by ratifying the European Charter of Local Self-Government.

The Congress also attaches great importance to the implementation of its recommendations adopted and addressed to national authorities in the framework of previous monitoring visits.

On Wednesday, on 30h October 2013, at its 25th Session, the Congress adopted resolutions 353(2013) and 307(2013) on the procedures for monitoring of local and regional democracy and on the procedures for post-monitoring. These resolutions now give the Congress a sounder procedural basis for managing these respective activities.

#### **i. Visits carried out**

Since April 2013, the Congress has carried out five local and regional monitoring visits in the following member states:

- **Ukraine (22-23 April 2013)**

During this second monitoring visit to Ukraine, Congress Rapporteurs Marc Cools (Belgium, ILDG) and Pascal Mangin (France, EPP/CCE) examined the follow-up to the commitments undertaken with regard to Ukraine's ratification of the European Charter of Local Self-Government in 1997. This visit completed a mission carried out from 21 to 23 May 2012. High level meetings were scheduled with representatives of the government namely the Minister for Regional Development, Building and Housing, Hennady Temnyk, the Deputy Minister of Finance Sergiy Rybak as well as with the Presidents of the Constitutional Court of Ukraine and the Accounting Chamber of Ukraine. The delegation held meetings with representatives of the parliament and of the administration of the President of Ukraine, and the Ombudsman. Finally the delegation also met with representatives of national associations of local and regional authorities as well as members of Kyiv City Council, and members of the Ukrainian delegation to the Congress.

- **The Netherlands (14-16 May 2013)**

Rapporteurs Artur Torres Pereira (Portugal, EPP/CCE) and Jean-Pierre Liouville (France, SOC) examined the follow-up to the commitments undertaken with regard to the Netherlands' ratification of the European Charter of Local Self-Government in 1991. High level meetings were scheduled with representatives of the government, namely the State Secretary for Finance Frans Weekers, with

representatives of the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations as well as with members of the Parliament, of the Council of State of the Netherlands, and representatives of the Audit offices and Ombudsmen. The delegation held meetings with the Deputy Mayor of Amsterdam, representatives of the Municipality of Gouda and the Municipality of Zoeterwoude. The delegation also met with members of the Dutch Delegation to the Congress and the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG) and the Association of Dutch Provinces (IPO).

- **The United Kingdom (28 May-1st June 2013 and 5-7 November 2013)**

Rapporteurs Angelika Kordfelder (Germany, SOC) and Alexander Uss (Russian Federation, EPP/CCE) twice visited the United Kingdom in 2013 to examine the state of local authorities and devolved regions, with regard to the commitments made by the UK since the ratification of the European Charter of Local Self-Government in April 1998. Meetings were held in London and Leeds, in particular with local elected representatives and members of the UK delegation to the Congress, as well as with members of Associations of local authorities and experts. In Edinburgh, the delegation met the Minister for Local Government and Planning of Scotland and members of the Scottish Parliament. On this occasion, the rapporteurs also attended the meeting of leaders of Scottish councils. The second part of the visit was devoted to meetings with representatives of the Ministry of Local Government, the Ministers responsible for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, members of the British Parliament, High Court judges, the Ombudsman and representatives of the Association of Local Authorities of Northern Ireland in London. The rapporteurs then went to Cardiff to meet the parliamentarians of the Welsh Assembly, the leader of Cardiff Council and representatives of associations of local authorities in Wales.

- **Sweden ( 23-25 September 2013)**

Rapporteurs Luzette Wagenaar-Kroon (the Netherlands, EPP/ECC) and Gudrun Mosler-Törnström (Austria, SOC) carried out a visit in Sweden to examine the follow-up to the commitments undertaken with regard to Sweden's ratification of the European Charter of Local Self-Government in 1989. High level meetings were scheduled with the Minister for Financial Markets and for Local Government and the Minister for Public Administration and Housing, as well as the Chair and members of the Parliamentary Committee on the Constitution, the President of the Supreme Administrative Court of Sweden, representatives of the Swedish Parliamentary Ombudsman Office and experts. Rapporteurs also held meetings with the Mayors and/or representatives of the cities of Stockholm, Norrköping and Flen as well as with members of the Swedish Delegation to the Congress and representatives of the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR).

- **Belgium (8-9 October 2013)**

Rapporteurs Henrik Hammar (Sweden, EPP/ECC) and Urs Wüthrich-Pelloli (Switzerland, SOC) examined the follow-up to the commitments undertaken with regard to Belgium's ratification of the European Charter of Local Self-Government in 2004. Rapporteurs met the Belgian delegation to the Congress, also the presidents of different local and provincial associations and unions; as well as representatives of the municipality of Tervuren, the Burgomaster, the President of Brussels Metropolitan, Burgomasters of Linkebeek, Krainem, Wazembeek-Oppem and the Burgomaster of Flobecq. The second part of the monitoring process in Belgium will be scheduled in January 2014. The delegation will meet representatives of the federal and regional levels on this occasion.

## **ii. Fact-finding missions**

The Congress may undertake field missions if allegations of non-respect of commitments regarding the European Charter of Local Self-Government are brought to its attention.

- **Georgia**

The rapporteurs for Georgia visited Tbilisi in February 2013, in response to a complaint filed by the Association of Local Authorities of Georgia (NALAG) alleging pressure on local elected officials - following the October 2012 elections which led to the establishment of a new government - causing them to resign their mandate or change party affiliation to the new majority party, thus endangering local democracy. In their report, the rapporteurs highlighted a violation of Article 3 of the Charter

because of delays by the authorities in taking appropriate measures, thereby generating an obstruction to the ability of elected representatives to manage their share of public affairs. They also pointed out the non-respect of a part of Article 6 of the Charter citing the resignations of elected representatives under pressure, and secondly with respect to Article 7, paragraph 1, citing the impossibility of elected officials to exercise their functions freely.

### **iii. Adopted recommendations**

During the 25th Session (October 2013), the Congress adopted 5 Recommendations on local and regional democracy in the following countries:

- **Ukraine**

The Congress examined a monitoring report and adopted the recommendation 348 (2013) on local and regional democracy in Ukraine subsequent to two monitoring visits made in May 2012 and April 2013. Congress rapporteurs Marc Cools (Belgium, ILDG) and Pascal Mangin (France, EPP/CCE) welcomed the positive initiatives taken by the Ukrainian government in view of a substantial territorial reform. They welcomed the process of consultation of local authorities established in the context of this reform. However, they regretted that despite strong statements of intent made at the highest state level for its implementation, it was not going ahead at the desired pace. The Congress recommends that the Ukrainian authorities review their legislation in order to remove the restrictions placed on the competences of local communities, equip them with more financial autonomy, accelerate the pace of reform, and hold elections as soon as possible to elect mayors in cities where the position has been vacant for a long time, especially in the capital city of Kyiv.

- **Albania**

Following a monitoring visit in December 2012, the Congress examined a report on the situation of local and regional democracy in Albania and adopted recommendation 349 (2013) in October 2013. The report notes with satisfaction that decentralisation of the state power has been a major component of democratisation in Albania and that the legislative framework is in line with the European Charter of Local Self-Government. However, in their report, Congress rapporteurs Ždenek Brož, (Czech Republic ECR) and Åke Svensson, (Sweden, SOC) regret the fragmentation of associations of local authorities and their incapacity to agree on common positions. They highlighted that one of the main issues is that the relations between local leaders and councillors in Albania is overshadowed by the over-politicised environment in the country, which raises a barrier between local representatives from different political parties. They also note the weakness of the regional level in the overall governance system. Consequently, the rapporteurs encourage the government to ensure the concurrent financing of delegated powers and to clarify and expand regional expertise to develop specific legislation to facilitate the consultation of local authorities by central authorities. The need to lead the existing associations to set up a body able to represent all local authorities was also the subject of a recommendation to the authorities.

- **Denmark**

The Congress examined a report on the state of local democracy in Denmark and adopted the recommendation 350(2013). The rapporteurs, Julia Costa, Portugal (L, EPP/CCE) and Jean-Pierre Liouville, France (R, SOC) emphasised with satisfaction that local democracy in Denmark is expressed by a “culture of the European Charter of Local Self-Government” which has only been confirmed by a major reform of local authorities in 2007 and welcomed the existing good practices at local level. They regretted the blurred nature of certain competences which are not clearly devolved to local authorities, the inadequate financial resources allocated to local authorities and the lack of mechanisms and procedures for financial equalization. The Congress delegation recommends clearly defining the areas of responsibility of local authorities, allocating adequate financial resources, and improving procedures for financial equalisation among the municipalities.

- **Hungary**

The Congress examined a report on local and regional democracy in Hungary and adopted the recommendation 341 (2013) following a monitoring visit to the country in May 2012. Congress

Rapporteurs Artur Torres Pereira (Portugal, EPP/CCE) and Devrim Çukur (Turkey, SOC) expressed their concern with regard to a general tendency towards the recentralisation of competences and the deterioration of the legislative framework applicable to local and regional issues. They highlighted the lack of consultation at local level by the central level, the low level of protection by the Constitution, for the principle of local autonomy and the absence of the right of effective recourse enabling them to offer a legal guarantee of their rights under the Charter. The Congress recommends that national authorities take measures to ensure the application of the principle of autonomy and financial independence of local and regional authorities to clearly define the responsibilities of local and regional authorities and ensure effective consultation process.

- **Ireland**

The Congress examined a report and adopted the recommendation 342 (2013) on the situation of local democracy in Ireland following two visits headed by the Rapporteurs Michael Cohen (Malta, SOC) and Merita Jegeni Yildiz (Turkey, EPP/CCE) in October 2012 et in May 2013. The report presented – following the replacement of the rapporteur - by Andris Jaunsleinis (Latvia, ILDG) and Merita Jegeni Yildiz (Turquie, PPE/CCE) in October 2013 highlights the fact that Ireland had made substantial changes since the last monitoring report in 2001, and welcomes the commitment of the Irish authorities to move from an almost fully-centralised system to a certain level of decentralisation, through an ambitious Action Programme adopted in October 2012. The report notes, however, that the constitutional protection of local self-government is rather weak, that local governments only manage a modest amount of public affairs, and that the administrative supervision of their activities by the central level remains high. The report also draws attention to the very limited powers of local authorities to levy taxes or to set rates within the limits of the law.

#### **iv. Post-monitoring activities**

The Congress is determined to continue political dialogue with national authorities, in particular in the framework of the implementation of the recommendations addressed to member states. It carried out two post-monitoring visits in the following member states:

- **Portugal**

The Congress carried out a post-monitoring visit to Portugal on 6 September 2013. Devrim Çukur (Turkey, SOC) and Jos Wienen (Netherlands, EPP/CCE). Congress Rapporteurs, held substantial meetings with the Portuguese Secretary of State of Local Administration, Antonio Leitão Amaro, as well as with the Portuguese delegation to the Congress and representatives of the National Association of Portuguese Municipalities (ANMP).

A second post-monitoring meeting is planned for January 2014 in order to agree on a roadmap for the implementation of the Congress's recommendation which was addressed to the Portuguese authorities.

- **Bosnia- Herzegovina**

Another post-monitoring meeting was held on 10 and 11 December in Sarajevo during which the rapporteurs Beat Hirs (Switzerland, ILDG) and Jean-Marie Belliard (France, EPP/CCE) met the delegation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and representatives of the three entities of the country to discuss a roadmap for the implementation of the Congress recommendations within a reasonable timeframe.

#### **b. The observation of local and regional elections**

The importance of election observation at local and regional level and its complementarity to the political monitoring process of the European Charter of Local Self-Government has been broadly acknowledged within the Council of Europe. With this in mind, a new package of Resolutions, including follow-up activities to monitoring and election observation missions, was adopted at the last Congress Session in October 2013. These resolutions now give the Congress a sounder procedural basis for managing these activities.

The Congress is also continuing its co-operation with the Venice Commission and its Council for Democratic Elections (see 2. Cooperation within the Council of Europe).

Another strategic partner in the field of election observation is the European Union's Committee of the Regions, which the Congress invites to join its election observation missions, and with whom it also co-operates in regular training sessions, along with national associations of local self-government.

Since April 2013, the Congress has organised the following local election observation mission:

- **Election of the Assembly of Aldermen (Yerevan, 5 May 2013)**

A 12-member delegation of the Council of Europe Congress composed of representatives from nine European countries including three members of the EU Committee of the Regions observed these elections. The Head of the delegation and Rapporteur, Stewart Dickson (UK, ILDG), presented preliminary conclusions following the observation of this vote by which the Mayor of Yerevan was also elected. M. Dickson stated that, with the exception of individual incidents in a few polling stations, the elections were carried out in a calm manner and that the vote was technically well prepared, although the counting process needs further improvement.

During the 25th Session, the Congress examined two reports and adopted the recommendations on the following elections:

- **Election of the Assembly of Aldermen, *Yerevan* (5 May 2013)**

The Congress adopted the Recommendation 344 (2013) and the Resolution 359 (2013), noting that the new Electoral Code of Armenia had contributed to the calm and technically well-prepared vote. Rapporteurs raised the issue of voter registration, recommending that the Armenian authorities make the Electoral Code more specific to ensure that the main place of permanent residence – in addition to registration – be a condition for voting rights at local level, thus ensuring that local questions are decided by the electorate actually living in a specific community.

- **Municipal elections in “The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” (24 March 2013)**

The Congress adopted the recommendation 345 (2013) and the resolution 360 (2013) on the municipal elections, observing that it was well-prepared, efficiently administered, conducted in an orderly manner and carried out in accordance with the standards for democratic elections. Rapporteurs however noted that there was a partisan election campaign in favour of the ruling coalition, and therefore recommended that “The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” ensures a pluralistic media landscape and appropriate working conditions for journalists, in harmony with genuinely democratic values.

## **5. Thematic activities**

### **a. Social inclusion**

#### **Network" Together for a shared responsibility"**

This network was organized around eight cities in eight countries to develop and implement social cohesion indicators based on the methodology of the Council of Europe. It should be joined by 200 municipalities in 15 countries. Gaye Doganoglu (Turkey, EPP / CCE), Vice-President of the Congress, participated in the second international meeting of co-responsibility Territories (Mulhouse, November 22, 2012). This network is consistent with the action of Congress in the field of social cohesion, in particular its Urban Charter II: Manifesto for a new urbanity, which invites local authorities to implement the principles of ethical governance, development sustainable and greater solidarity in their public policies.



## **The European Alliance of Cities and Regions for Roma Inclusion**

The main aim of the European Alliance of Cities and Regions for Roma is to strengthen the capacity of cities and regions in developing policies and implementing successful projects for Roma inclusion.

From October 2013, a new joint Council of Europe / European Commission (ROMACT), which aims to develop Roma integration policies at the local level using an approach combining housing, employment, education and health has been implemented. This project will focus initially on five countries (Bulgaria, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Slovakia) and build on the groundwork already done by the Council of Europe (through the ROMED project) and the Foundation Open Society (via MERI programme).

- **International Roma Day (8 April 2013)**

In view of International Roma Day which brings attention to challenges Roma people continue to face in Europe, Herwig van Staa, President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, underlined the responsibility of local and regional authorities to provide inclusive Roma policies and he reiterated that the Alliance of Cities and Regions for Roma Inclusion, which was launched on 20 March 2013, has been set up for this purpose.

- **City of Innsbruck, Austria, joins the Alliance (26 April 2013)**

Christine Oppitz-Plörer (Austria, EPP/CCE), the Mayor of Innsbruck highlighted that the European spirit originates from face-to-face encounters between the cultures, that is why I think that exchanges with minorities such as the Roma are important for mutual understanding.. After visiting a Tyrolean school with a special focus on Roma education, which ran a successful student fundraising campaign for a Roma partner school in Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén county (Hungary), she announced the participation of the City of Innsbruck in the European Alliance of Cities and Regions for Roma Inclusion.

- **General Council of the French département of Val de Marne joined the Alliance (10 June 2013)**

This accession followed a visit to Strasbourg by a delegation from the Val de Marne. The Alliance now brings together 120 local and regional authorities.

- **Participation of the Alliance Taskforce in the Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative (2 August 2013)**

The world's largest Roma Genocide Remembrance Event "Dik l na Bistar / Look and don't forget" took place on 2 August at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and State Museum. It was organized by the ternYpe International Roma Youth Network. More than 400 youths from over 20 countries participated in the youth commemoration at the site of the former so-called "Gypsy camp". The great number of participants underlined the growing importance of Roma youth movements fighting against prejudices and stereotypes and striving for official recognition of the 2 August as an international day of remembrance for the victims of Parrajimos (Roma genocide). The President of the Congress reiterated that the day of 2 August, dedicated to the memory of the hundreds of thousands of Roma massacred by the Nazis during the Second World War, reminds us of the need to build a Europe of peace and tolerance, involving all levels of governance. He estimated that a joint commitment by European authorities to implementing practical activities on the ground will help to combat prejudice and he called on the local and regional authorities of Europe to join the Alliance.

- **Official Launch of the ROMACT Programme ( Budapest, 4 October 2013)**

The new ROMACT programme was officially launched in Budapest (Hungary) on Friday 4 October at a national conference attended by over 100 national and international players. Laszló Andor, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, Zoltán Kovács, Hungarian Secretary of State for Social Inclusion, and Jeroen Schokkenbroek, Special Representative of the Council of Europe Secretary General spoke at the opening of the conference. They welcomed and underlined the importance of this new activity. ROMACT is an initiative of the Council of Europe, the European Commission and the European Alliance of Cities and Regions for Roma Inclusion (set up in March 2013 by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities). The aim of the programme is to help European local and regional authorities frame and implement strategies and policies to promote Roma inclusion. It complements the ROMED Programme for the training of cultural mediators.

- **Launching Events of the ROMACT Programme in Bulgaria and Romania (14 and 15 October 2013)**

Following the first national launching conference of the ROMACT programme, which took place in Budapest, two other official launching events were held in Albena, (Bulgaria) and in Bucharest (Romania) with the participation of several officials from the European Commission, Council of Europe, Open Society Foundation, as well as the representatives of the Bulgarian and Romanian authorities. The project ROMACT will be implemented in several pilot municipalities in Bulgaria and Romania. The project will be launched in Bulgaria and in Romania jointly with the ROMED II programme – a follow up to the successful training of Roma mediators, implemented by the Council of Europe and the European Commission since January 2011.

- **International Promotion of Roma Culture (Marseille, 30-31 October 2013)**

The Alliance together with the European Institute of Cultural Routes and the Region Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur Region (PACA) co-organised an international conference under the general label of promoting and networking for the European dimension of Roma culture. This was to raise awareness of Roma culture and to examine the problems of discrimination and anti-gypsyism past and present. The conference showed how culture, in its various aspects, could help Roma and non-Roma communities live in harmony within local and regional communities and enrich their differences. The conference presented projects and initiatives from Croatia, Germany, Hungary and Switzerland. Discussions also focused on the importance of recognising and commemorating the genocide of Roma during the Second World War.

- **Launching Conference of the ROMA / 2 ROMED Programme (Kosice (Slovakia), 5 November, 2013)**

The Secretary General of the Congress pointed out that, even when there is a political will, the local administration does not always have the capacity to develop, implement and monitor policies, which hampers the implementation of Roma inclusion strategies at the local level and, in particular, the efficient use of EU funds. He said that the objective of the ROMACT project will provide mayors, councillors and local government officials a set of services in mediation, capacity building, skills development, but also monitoring assessment and assistance to develop projects that could be eligible for EU funding.

## **Congress Dosta ! Prize**

- **4th edition of the "Congress-Dosta! Prize for municipalities"**

The 4th Dosta!-Congress Prize for Municipalities has been awarded to the city of Obrnice (Czech Republic), the city of Heraklion (Greece), and the regional authority of Kocaeli (Turkey) in the framework of the 25th Session of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of

Europe in Strasbourg (France). 'Dosta', a Romani word meaning 'enough', is an awareness raising campaign for the Council of Europe which aims at bringing non-Roma closer to Roma citizens. The Congress-prize is awarded biannually for innovative municipal projects promoting Roma integration, combating discrimination against Roma, and raising awareness of Roma culture and rights. In 2013, over 20 municipalities from 15 European countries participated in the contest.

## **Roma Youth**

- **International seminar on young Roma in Europe ( Prague, 31 May to 2 June 2013)**

In her statement, Inger Linge (Sweden, EPP/CCE) co-rapporteur of the Congress on Roma youth, described the process currently underway in the Congress to examine the situation of young Roma people and to devise a number of recommendations which will be addressed to local and regional authorities. As well as briefly explaining the connection between the Council of Europe's *raison d'être* and the Congress's work on Roma youth, she declared that "ensuring participation and empowerment for young Roma people, their access to social human rights and combatting discrimination and anti-Gypsyism are very important issues.

### **b. Citizen participation:**

- **Conference on "Citizen participation from the European perspective" (Ludwigsburg, Germany, 18 April 2013)**

In his speech, the Congress Secretary General reiterated that the local and regional tier of governance, as the level closest to citizens, also represents a great potential for innovation as far as citizen participation is concerned, often acting as a testing ground for new forms of participation before they become accepted at national and European level as good practice for all. He highlighted that the multiple crises affecting Europe today which have revealed the limits of the current democratic system and have heightened public distrust in democracy, have paradoxically been brought to the fore by the need for a participatory model of democracy which will require a new, decentralised system of multi-level governance, based on a comprehensive framework for citizen participation and supported by active democratic citizenship.

- **Conference of Presidents of the Austrian and German regional parliaments and the South Tyrolean Landtag (Krems, (Austria) 11 June 2013)**

The Congress President highlighted that the members of regional parliaments account for around 80% of the German, Austrian, Belgian, Italian and Spanish national delegations to the Congress and they are therefore key in sharing their innovative experiences as regards shaping and implementing public policies and fostering citizen participation. In the presence of the presidents of the National and the Federal Councils of Austria, the conference discussed citizen participation in the modern information Society and adopted the "Declaration of Krems." Herwig van Staa and Andreas Kiefer presented the work of the Congress in this field and invited the regional parliaments to contribute with their innovative projects to help strengthen the trust of citizens in political bodies, including during the Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers.

- **Conference on Participatory Democracy at Local Level (Yerevan, 19 June 2013)**

The President of the Congress reiterated that the issue of participation is included in the priorities of the Congress for 2013-2016 because the quality of democracy depends on citizen participation in democratic processes. The conference was organised under the Armenian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in close co-operation with the Congress. It addressed in particular the current situation in member states, the role of participatory democracy in improving the efficiency of local authorities and the ways of strengthening participatory democracy at local level.

- **Seminar on good democratic governance at local and regional level (Strasbourg, 18 June 2013)**

Congress representative, Raymond Svensson (Sweden, ILDG), Rapporteur on the partnership between local and regional authorities and civil society, presented some good local and regional practices already implemented in Europe – such as participatory budgeting, local referenda or citizen consultations on community development projects. He pointed to a lack of implementation by local and regional authorities of the Code of Good Practice for Civil Participation in the Decision-Making Process, adopted by the Council of Europe Conference of international NGOs in 2009. This issue will be raised in his new report, which will be prepared in co-operation with NGOs.

- **World Summit of Local and Regional Leaders – United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) (Rabat (Morocco 3 October).**

In his statement, Jean- Claude Frécon, President of the Chamber of Local Authorities of the Congress, declared that a specific legal framework at both national and local level is needed to guarantee the citizens' right to participation, by providing them with the procedures to facilitate such participation. He highlighted as well that to ensure the citizens' active commitment to local governance it was necessary to establish a policy of education for active democratic citizenship and human rights benefiting all citizens.

- **European Local Democracy Week (ELDW)**

ELDW is celebrated every year during the week of 15 October, the date when the European Charter of Local Self-Government opened for signature. It aims at raising citizens' awareness on the possibilities available to them in terms of actively participating in politics and in decision-making at the local level. It also encourages local elected representatives to enter into dialogue with inhabitants in order to encourage transparency and responsibility.

The 2013 edition of the European Local Democracy Week 2013 had the theme of "Active citizenship: voting, sharing, and participating".

During the week from 14 to 20 October 2013, events and activities took place in some 100 towns and regions in the member states of the Council of Europe. The 2013 edition comprised some 200 activities organised by 100 partners, including 18 '12- Star'cities, 44 communities and 34 associations, representing some 11,500,000 citizens. In addition, for the first time, ELDW welcomed as a partner the No Hate Speech Movement of the Council of Europe, which is also holding an Action Week to highlight the threat of hate speech to local democracy. Dubravka Suica, Spokesperson on ELDW for the Congress, has addressed a letter of support to all partners congratulating them on their creative ideas to celebrate this year's theme.

- **Conference on "Residence-based participation: a new reality of modern democracy" (Strasbourg, 27 November 2013)**

This Conference, co-organised by the Congress and the City of Strasbourg with the participation of . Roland Ries, Mayor of Strasbourg and the President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, aimed to examine the new perspectives of citizen participation at a local level, in the current climate of increasing diversity of European societies. Jean Claude Frécon, President of the Chamber of Local Authorities of the Congress, declared that participatory democracy and intercultural society are the right answers to the democratic deficit. He stressed that foreign residents made a significant contribution to the economic and social development of our societies and that it was local and regional government's duty to combat the prejudices and negative attitudes affecting migrants, particularly through intercultural education and communication.

### **c. Children's Rights**

The action of the Congress in promoting children's rights and the fight against the sexual exploitation of children falls within both the new strategy to implement fundamental standards to protect and promote children's rights, adopted in February 2012 by the Council of Europe, and the ONE in FIVE Campaign to combat sexual violence against children, launched by the Organisation in 2010.

The Congress is working in close collaboration with the Coordination Unit of the Children's Rights Programme and the Parliamentary Assembly Secretariat on the ONE in FIVE campaign.

The Congress has continued to promote its Pact of Towns and Regions to Stop Sexual Violence against Children, in particular by participating in the following events:

- **The 7th Annual Conference of the European Network "Cities for Children" (13 May 2013)**

Clemens Lammerskitten (Germany, EPP/CCE) Vice-President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and member of the regional parliament of Lower Saxony (Germany), highlighted that the Congress's commitment to the Council of Europe's ONE in FIVE Campaign and reiterated that the Pact of Towns and Regions to Stop Sexual Violence against Children to stop child sexual exploitation and abuse, launched in this context by the Congress. He explained that the Pact contains examples of policies, activities, initiatives and structures which we feel local and regional authorities can usefully implement to achieve the aims of the campaign. He called on the Network "Cities for Children" to join the ONE in FIVE Campaign.

- **Parliamentary Conference on the implementation of the ONE in FIVE Campaign (Baku, 1<sup>st</sup> June 2013)**

Clemens Lammerskitten represented the Congress at this conference and reiterated that the Lanzarote Convention and the Pact of Towns and Regions to Stop Sexual Violence against Children are two tools aiming to prevent abuse, protect victims, and prosecute perpetrators while ensuring the full participation of children. He highlighted that the major challenge remains to encourage towns and regions to sign up to the Pact and he announced that Dammarie-lès-Lys – the town of which Jean-Claude Mignon, President of the Parliamentary Assembly, is Mayor – has signed up. Closing his presentation, Mr Lammerskitten expressed his wish that the joint efforts continue in the Council's member states to raise awareness of the ONE in FIVE Campaign and the Pact.

- **Conference on violence in sports, including sexual violence (Budapest, 7 October 2013)**

Johan van den Hout (Netherlands, SOC), Congress Thematic Spokesperson on Children and Permanent Deputy of Noord-Brabant Province, presented the Pact of Towns and Regions. He stated that measures to combat sexual violence against children will always be cost-effective as they are an investment in a healthy community, based on the respect for human right.

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- **Meetings of the Parliamentary Assembly and the Leventis Foundation (Nicosia, Cyprus 12 -14 October)**

Johan van de Hout, took part in a series of five events as part of the Council of Europe ONE in FIVE Campaign. A pilot project, together with a video clip aimed at breaking the silence that surrounds child sexual abuse, was presented. On this occasion, Mr van den Hout met with the Mayors of Nicosia and Limassol to present the Pact.

- **Extraordinary meeting of the Network of Contact Parliamentarians on One in Five campaign to stop sexual violence against children, (Geneva, 13 November 2013)**

Johan van de Hout presented the new Meldcode or Reporting Code, carried out in the Netherlands, aiming to help professionals to ensure a swift intervention in suspected cases of domestic violence and child abuse by providing clear steps to be taken. He highlighted that all sectors working with or welcoming children must set up a reporting system referring to the success of such an action during a

trial period in Rotterdam. He also reported on the progress in raising local and regional awareness of the Congress Pact of Towns and Regions in Council of Europe member states.

#### **d. Youth**

The Congress tried to identify the reasons why young people are apparently disengaging from conventional political participation. It concluded that they engage differently today according to their own understanding of democracy and citizenship.

In order to better understand these new forms of political engagement so young people can continue to have their voice heard in decision-making processes, the Congress, in cooperation with the European Union/Council of Europe Partnership on Youth, has launched a call for research on this issue, the results of which will inform the Congress's future work on youth participation.

In particular, the Congress decided to dedicate its two Sessions in 2014 to this issue, inviting national delegations to involve young people and let them participate in the proceedings during the sessions.

- **Conference on "The role of young people in conflict transformation and intercultural dialogue", (Andorra-La-Vella, 15 April 2013)**

Michael O'Brien, Vice-President of the Congress (Ireland, SOC) highlighted the importance of the cooperation between youth organisations and municipalities in order to build intercultural relations. He stressed the role of youth initiatives, such as the Youth Peace Ambassadors, in advocating respect of citizens' human rights and dignity, and in fostering intercultural dialogue. He also highlighted the important role played by these towns, regions and their elected representatives in uniting firmly against prejudice and hate speech and in denouncing them publicly. He mentioned, in particular, the project of Stevenage Borough (Hertfordshire) presented during the Conference by Sherma Batson, Congress member (United Kingdom, SOC) in which young people, civil society and municipal councils work together closely. He underlined that "the Congress promotes interculturalism in the towns and regions in Council of Europe member states through its support of the Intercultural Cities Network." The Congress has been supporting the Intercultural Cities Network since 2009 and called on local authorities to recognize the contribution migrants and foreign residents make to European societies and to adopt local intercultural policies.

- **Seminar on the role of local youth participation in the framework of the Enter! project (Strasbourg, 13 – 15 November 2013)**

The Youth Department of the Council of Europe, in co-operation with the Congress and in the framework of the Enter! Project, organised a seminar on "Local youth participation and access to social rights for all young people: which ways forward?" with the participation of Congress members Samira Aliyeva, (Azerbaijan, SOC), Sari Janatuinen, (Finland, SOC), and Alison Cook, (United Kingdom, ECR).

#### **e. Support for the democratic process in the Euro-Mediterranean region**

- **The Lisbon Forum: encouraging constructive dialogue and promote democracy in the countries of Europe's southern neighbourhood (7 November 2013)**

Jean-Claude Frécon, President of the Chamber of Local Authorities, highlighted that democracy is never fully achieved, it is always a process and that the local dimension is absolutely essential. It is at this level that democracy takes root and where it will be possible to bring about the necessary interaction between elected representatives who have democratic legitimacy, and civil society. He reiterated that the Congress is ready to help the countries of the south in three ways: with the principles of local democracy (as codified in the European Charter of Local Self-Government, ratified by the 47 Council of Europe member states), at institutional level – a partner for local democracy status open to the countries of the south and the east is being prepared – and through targeted co-operation activities.

- **First Mediterranean University on Youth and Global Citizenship (Hammamet (Tunisia) 2 July 2013)**

Congress representative Marie-Madeleine Mialot Muller (France SOC), expressed the hope that, alongside a stable national democratic system, Tunisia would succeed in setting up a system of local and regional democracy that was receptive to input from civil society, particularly from the young people to whom Tunisia's future belongs. Organised by the Council of Europe's North-South Centre, the University aims to promote the development of youth activities and the democratic participation of young people in the Mediterranean region, as well as the inclusion of related subjects on the political agenda and the development of youth policies. Ms Mialot Muller took part in two workshops, one on "youth participation and social media" and the other on "the role of members of civil society in democratic transformations: sharing the experience of central and eastern European NGOs".

#### **f. Intercultural and interreligious dialogue**

- **General Conference of the European Coalition of Cities against Racism (Nancy, France, 17 October 2013)**

Jon Hermans-Vloedveld, (Netherlands, ILDG) Congress Thematic Spokesperson on Citizen Participation, reiterated that local authorities can make a great contribution to fighting discrimination, by working to change prejudices and negative attitudes of local residents through intercultural dialogue, education and communication. She highlighted that the European Local Democracy Week can serve as a practical tool for engaging all residents across cultural differences in community building.

- **Conference on "Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Intolerance in Europe", (Yerevan, Armenia, 21 October 2013)**

Michael O'Brien (Ireland, SOC), Vice-President of the Congress, reiterated that local authorities can make a great difference in the fight against racism. He highlighted that European directives and national laws are important, but they will remain a dead letter unless they are implemented at the level where their impact is most tangible: in our grassroots communities, namely in local authorities where they can contribute to changing the perceptions of local residents through intercultural dialogue, education and communication.

- **2013 Council of Europe Meeting on the religious dimension of intercultural dialogue (Yerevan, Armenia, 2-3 September 2013)**

On 2 September 2013, Congress Vice-President John Warmisham addressed the 2013 Council of Europe Exchange on the religious dimension of intercultural dialogue. This meeting on the issue of "Freedom of religion in today's world: challenges and guarantees", took place in the framework of the Armenian Chairmanship of the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers. Discussions were organised around three thematic panels: "Freedom of religion, conscience and thought as a fundamental human right in contemporary societies"; "Protection of persons belonging to religious minorities, believers and non-believers and their contribution to the fight against intolerance, discrimination and hate speech with regard to freedom of religion"; and "Avenues for future action within and beyond Europe: youth education and awareness-raising on religion and beliefs, dialogue and co-operation among and with religious and non-religious representatives".

Congress Vice-President John Warmisham (United Kingdom, SOC) highlighted that protecting religious freedom in today's world goes beyond upholding guarantees provided by international law and human rights protection systems. He stressed the necessity of changing our mental constructs and perceptions of the religious values of others, and building a relationship of dialogue and co-operation between religious communities as well as between believers and non-believers.

## **g. Others**

- **EUDEM's Conference on European Democracy, (Vienna, 7-8 May 2013)**

Andreas Kiefer reiterated that, in the context of the current crisis, the difficulty of combining unity and diversity between nation states and cultural groups in society and achieving the right balance has become especially clear, stressing the dangers of citizens' loss of trust in democratic governance, the loss of social cohesion in European society, and the possible failure in managing the growth of cultural diversity. He highlighted that it is important to put forward guidelines and standards for developing democracy which privilege the bottom-up approach, aimed at empowering citizens by giving more competences to local and regional authorities.

- **The VI Nevsky International Ecological Congress on 'Environmental Awareness as a Tool of Environmental Solutions' (St Petersburg, 21 May 2013)**

President of the Congress Chamber of Regions Nataliya Romanova, (Ukraine, ILDG), reiterated that local and regional authorities are best placed to raise environmental awareness among the local population, due to their physical proximity to citizens, highlighting that they also have the means to do so as the decentralisation of power and fiscal devolution have endowed local and regional authorities with a growing scope of competences and responsibilities in the areas that are key to building a healthy and sustainable environment.

- **Conference-debate on transfrontier co-operation and regional languages (Strasbourg, 3 June 2013)**

Karl-Heinz Lambertz (Belgium, SOC), Chair of the Governance Committee of the Congress and the Minister-President of the German-Speaking Community of Belgium and President of the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR), spoke on the occasion of this conference-debate on "Transfrontier co-operation and regional languages: the example of the German-speaking community of Belgium". This meeting provided the opportunity to take a look at the situation in Alsace from a European perspective.

- **Conference on Sustainable Urban Innovation (Munster, 10 July 2013)**

Andreas Kiefer recalled that the European Charter of Local Self-Government promotes innovation in that its implementation requires innovative approaches. He said that compared to centralised states, decentralised states are characterised by a greater propensity for experimentation and innovation and more diversity and dynamism.

## **6. Cooperation activities and External Relations**

### **a. External partnerships**

#### **i. The Committee of the Regions of the European Union**

As laid out by the Memorandum of Understanding between the Council of Europe and the European Union, the Congress has co-operated closely with the EU's Committee of the Regions (CoR), focusing on complementarity within the respective fields of activity, and emphasizing co-operation while avoiding duplication.

On 22 April 2013, the Secretary General of the Congress took part in the meeting of the Commission for Citizenship, Governance, Institutional and External Affairs (CIVEX) of the Committee of the Regions, and on 14 May 2013 the Congress co-organised a Conference on Fiscal Decentralisation in the Eastern Partnership with the Committee of the Regions.



On 30 May 2013, President Van Staa met Mr Valcarcel Siso, the President of the Committee of the Regions, for their annual bipartite meeting. They discussed the basis for future joint actions between the two institutions, in particular agreeing on the organisation of a joint meeting between the Governance Committee of the Congress and the CIVEX Commission of the Committee of the Regions. This event will take place in 2014 in conjunction with the celebration of the 20th anniversaries of the Congress and of the CoR.

The Congress also took part in the Seminar “Territorial cooperation – models and challenges of democratic governance and citizens’ involvement across borders”, organised by the Committee of the Regions on 8-9 July 2013, in Bolzano (Italy).

On 3 September 2013 President van Staa represented the Congress in the third annual Conference of the Regional and Local Authorities for the Eastern Partnership (CORLEAP), held in Vilnius. He brought to the event the Congress’ experience in the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries, and those countries which are members of the Council of Europe, and assessed the co-operation programmes that the Congress and the Council of Europe have underway.

President of the Chamber of the Regions Nataliya Romanova (Ukraine, ILDG), represented the Congress at the Conference on “Fiscal Decentralisation in the Eastern Partnership – challenges and opportunities” co-organised by the Congress and the Committee of Regions on 14 May 2013 in Brussels.

As a follow-up to the Congress’ activities in monitoring local and regional democracy, which is of great interest for the Committee of the Regions, the Congress and the CoR co-organised a Hearing on local and regional democracy in Ukraine (see 6. Co-operation programmes), on 18 November 2013 in Brussels.

## **ii. Networks**

### **• The Association of Local Democracy Agencies (ALDA)**

The Congress monitors very closely the evolution of ALDA and is regularly represented at its major meetings and in its decision-making bodies.

### **• The Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South East Europe (NALAS)**

This network, created at the initiative of the Congress in 2001, continues to be a special partner of the Congress in its field activities in Southeast Europe. The Congress participated in the General Assembly on 19 and 20 April 2013.

## **iii. European Associations of local and regional authorities**

The Congress pays a great deal of attention to co-operation with representative associations of cities and regions in Europe.

### **• Plenary Assembly of European Regional Legislative Assemblies (CALRE)**

Congress Vice-President Clemens Lammerskitten (Germany, EPP/CCE), represented the Congress at the CALRE meeting held in Brussels from 21 to 22 October 2013. He highlighted the reform process within the Congress and the current topics of the Congress’s work, in particular the activities analysing the effects of the economic and financial crisis and their consequences for regional self-government bodies throughout Europe. He underlined that the Congress’s increased monitoring activities produce positive results for local and regional democracy within member states of the Council of Europe. The Conference held a broad discussion about methods and instruments to back the role of regional legislative assemblies in the context of the future integration process in the European Union.

- **Assembly of European Regions (AER)**

The Congress participated in the 3rd Summit on "Regions and the economic crisis" and the General Assembly of the Assembly of European Regions (AER), which were held in Paris on 18 and 19 May 2013.

President of the Chamber of Regions Nataliya Romanova (Ukraine, ILDG), represented the Congress on the occasion of the 4th AER Black Sea Regional Summit in Rize (Turkey) on 4 October 2013. She indicated that re-launching the Black Sea Euroregion initiative would be a tool to resolve problems of coastal management, environmental challenges, migration and use of energy sources as well as to promote the tourism and the transport development of this area. She reiterated that it is imperative to build much closer co-operation between cities and regions; to counterbalance tensions by dialogue and joint projects between local and regional authorities thus improving stability, security and the prosperity of its populations.

## **b. Cooperation programmes and action plans**

The Congress has continued to develop its co-operation activities in a number of countries and has submitted projects for co-financing to potential donors.

### **i. Member states of the Council of Europe**

- **Albania**

Within the framework of the project entitled "Strengthening local government structures and co-operation of local elected representatives", run by the Council of Europe, the Congress is leading the setting-up of a unified platform for dialogue and co-operation between local and regional elected representatives.

This project, which will be implemented until 2015, is funded by the Swiss Agency for development and co-operation. The total budget amounts to € 1,480,000, of which € 560,000 is for the Congress's activities

Three regional seminars were organised in Fier, Elbasan and Lezha on 3, 4 and 5 April and attended by approximately 150 Mayors of municipalities and communes, and Presidents of municipal and regional councils. The objective was to gain legitimacy for forthcoming activities in the framework of the project, raise awareness of the need for a unified voice of all local and regional authorities in Albania, and discuss a strategy for the establishment of such a common platform. The declaration "Conclusion – The Way Forward" was adopted at the end of each seminar

Owing to the extreme political tension in the country during the parliamentary election campaign of 23 June, project meetings for which constructive dialogue and bi-partisan support are necessary were put on hold.

Activities were resumed in September, when a delegation of 50 Mayors, Heads of Municipal Councils and Presidents of Regions participated in the NEXPO International Municipal Fair in Rijeka (Croatia) from 25 to 27 September 2013. During the workshop on Co-operation between Albanian mayors as a tool for developing local self-government, Albanian local elected representatives reassessed the need for co-operation and agreed that the meeting of the single and pluralistic platform for dialogue should take place on 23 October in Tirana.

On 3 and 4 October Andreas Kiefer, Secretary General of the Congress, paid an official visit to Albania aimed at establishing further contacts with representatives of the new Albanian Government – among them Deputy Prime Minister Niko Peleshi and Minister Bledar Çuçi - and the newly-elected parliament. On 17 October Denis Huber, Head of the Co-operation, Administration and External Relations Department of the Congress, made an opening speech – together with the Prime Minister and the Heads of the EU and OSCE delegations in Tirana - at a national conference organised by the State Ministry of Local Government to discuss administrative and territorial reform in Albania.

The first meeting of the Common Platform, attended by 17 mayors, chairs of municipal councils, presidents of regions, and representatives of local government associations, took place on 23 October in Tirana, without achieving results.

Alternative options are currently being studied in particular with a view to helping central authorities set up a Consultative Council to allow dialogue on the administrative territorial reform, the decentralisation agenda, and any matter of concern to local and regional authorities.

During the 25th Congress session, the President of the Congress met with Ferdinand Poni, special advisor for local self-government issues to Lulzim Basha, leader of the Democratic Party, and with members of the Albanian delegation to the Congress who expressed concern about alleged violations of principles of the Charter by the present government.

The Congress will participate in a peer-review exercise on territorial administrative reform in Albania where elected representatives from European governments who have conducted a similar reform exchange information. The peer review took place on 20-22 November in Tirana with the participation of Michael O'Brien, Vice-President of the Congress, who will present the point of view of the local/regional authorities that have experienced such a reform.

- **Armenia**

On 16 September 2013 the Council of Europe signed an agreement with the Government of Denmark for the implementation of the project "Support for the consolidation of local democracy in Armenia", which is included in the Action Plan for Armenia 2012-2014, which comprises three lines of action, of which the third focuses on the strengthening of the leadership capacities of local elected representatives, proposed by the Congress.

The project component implemented by the Congress aims at increasing local elected representatives' knowledge of good practices in the field of local democracy, so as to ultimately improve local political governance in the country, and allow for successful implementation of the local government reform.

The project started on 1 October 2013 and will last until September 2015 for Line of Action III). The total budget is € 1,785, 000, including € 575,000 for the Congress's activities.

Congress Vice-President John Warmisham and the Secretary General, Andreas Kiefer, met on 11 October with Deputy Prime Minister Armen Gevorgyan, who expressed his support for the activities implemented by the Congress in this framework. The meeting of the Steering Committee of the Armenia Action Plan (which will be chaired by Armen Gevorgyan) will take place on 12 December 2013 in Yerevan.

The Congress was also invited to participate in a peer-review exercise to help the Armenian Government develop the process for territorial administrative reform on 11-12 November in Yerevan. Congress Vice-President Knud Andersen (Denmark, ILDG), presented the point of view of the local/regional authorities that experienced such a reform.

- **Azerbaijan**

A Council of Europe draft Action Plan for Azerbaijan 2013-2015 is currently being discussed. The Congress proposes to contribute to the development of a comprehensive strategy for decentralisation through the drawing-up of a legislative framework for local democracy in compliance with its Recommendation 326(2012), thus complementing the proposal drafted by the Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform.

- **Bosnia and Herzegovina**

The Council of Europe is currently preparing a co-operation document for Bosnia and Herzegovina for 2013-2015 which includes a project on local democracy, presented jointly by the Congress and the Centre of Expertise, to further strengthen democracy and good governance at local level in the country. Activities are planned in order to support the development of a roadmap for the implementation of the Congress' recommendations, which should be discussed during post-monitoring meetings. The first meeting is planned to take place on 10-11 December 2013 in Sarajevo.

- **Georgia**

The Council of Europe Action Plan for Georgia 2013-2015 was approved on 16 October 2013. The Georgian Government agreed to include local governance as one of the priority areas as it is currently considering undertaking a major local government reform. The Congress may participate in the launch of the Action Plan in Tbilisi (end of 2013).

The three-year-long project takes into account Congress Recommendation 334(2013) on local and regional democracy in Georgia and includes three components: support for the reform and in particular for the process of consultation with local authorities, training of young political leaders with a view to local elections in October 2014, and strengthening of the capacity of local elected representatives as leaders for change. The project also includes a component on citizen participation. The idea of organising a round table with the Georgian Parliament, Government and local authorities in the near future, as an integral part of the proposal included in the Action Plan, was discussed with David Usuphashvili, President of the Georgian Parliament, during his meeting with the Congress President on 1st October 2013.

- **Republic of Moldova**

The Council of Europe finalised the Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova 2013-2016, which was adopted on 19 November by the Committee of Ministers. The chapter on local democracy and decentralisation includes a line of action on strengthening local democracy and governance, drawn up by the Congress in close collaboration with the association of local authorities (the Congress of Local Authorities of Moldova - CALM). It covers the following activities: establishing a post-monitoring dialogue in order to implement Recommendation 322(2012) which includes the issue of the distribution of powers and responsibilities between the centre and the regions, in particular the Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia; strengthening local political governance; increasing local elected representatives' capacities as drivers for change; promoting a dialogue with central and local authorities and consolidating the CALM as a major interlocutor between central and local authorities.

- **Russia**

Local democracy is one of the priorities in the co-operation document for the Russian Federation in 2013-2014 which is currently being drafted. The Congress will contribute to a project which has been developed by the Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform. The project's main objectives are to improve the quality of local governance, to increase efficiency and effectiveness of local administration, to promote sustainable policies and to improve citizens' access to services, as well as their involvement in public decisions.

- **Ukraine**

The 2011-2014 Council of Europe revised Action Plan for Ukraine was adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 19 November 2013. On the occasion of its meeting in Kyiv on 12 June, the Action Plan Steering Committee concluded that there was a need to reinforce efforts in the field of local democracy. The Congress and the Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform jointly drafted a new project for 2014-2017.

In the meantime, the Danish authorities have expressed their willingness to support the continuity of the actions led by the Council of Europe in the field of local democracy in Ukraine. A programme has been set up, with funding of € 600,000 until December 2014, and included in the revised Action Plan. It offers a follow-up to the activities aimed at strengthening the capacities of local and regional authorities and at providing the Ukrainian Government with legal assistance.

The Congress' contribution to the programme will consist of two parts: one of them concerns post-monitoring dialogue with a view to the drawing-up of a roadmap in 2014 in order to implement Congress Recommendation 348(2013) adopted at the 25th Congress Session on 31 October 2013; the other will focus on the training of young political leaders so they can develop their capacity to engage in the 2015 local elections.

Regarding the post-monitoring dialogue, a first round table was organised in Kyiv on 11 November 2013 with the participation of Marc Cools (Belgium, ILDG), rapporteur, and all actors in the development of local democracy in Ukraine (Vice-Prime-Minister, President's administration, Parliament of Ukraine, Minister of Regional Development, State Foundation of Local Self-Government, associations of local governments, Ukrainian delegation to the Congress).

In addition, in the framework of the co-operation with the Committee of Regions, a joint hearing took place on 18 November 2013 in Brussels with the participation of rapporteurs Marc Cools and Pascal Mangin (France, EPP/CCE), as well as Nataliya Romanova, President of the Chamber of Regions, to present and further discuss the Congress' recommendations with the international community.

## **ii. Council of Europe activities for the development and consolidation of democratic stability**

### **• Belarus**

The Congress has proposed activities to foster the development of local democracy in Belarus. This includes raising awareness on the European Charter of Local Self-Government among national authorities, local authorities and civil society in Belarus, sharing European experiences on the implementation of the Charter and providing an assessment of the compliance of Belarusian legislation and draft legislation with CoE standards in the field of local democracy.

Following the discussions with the Belarus authorities in the spring of 2013, Jean-Claude Frécon, President of the Chamber of Local Authorities, and Nataliya Romanova, President of the Chamber of Regions, visited Minsk from 24 to 27 September in order to discuss further co-operation, in particular the preparation of a seminar on the European Charter of Local Self-Government. Meetings took place with representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Minsk City Council, the committee responsible for local government in the Upper House of Parliament, and with civil society representatives. This seminar, which should take place in May 2014, was discussed again during a meeting held by Jean-Claude Frécon, President of the Chamber of Local Authorities, with representatives of the government of Belarus, on 31 October 2013, during the 25<sup>th</sup> Congress session.

### **• Kosovo<sup>3</sup>**

The Congress has developed a project aimed at raising authorities' and local elected representatives' awareness of decentralisation issues and of the role of local elected representatives with the objective of strengthening democratic values and governance in Kosovo. This project is part of the Council of Europe's overview of co-operation activities in Kosovo, which was discussed within the Committee of Ministers and between the Council of Europe and its main international partners.

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<sup>3 3</sup> \* All reference to Kosovo in this text, whether to the territory, institutions or population, shall be understood in full compliance with Resolution 1244 of the Security Council of the United Nations and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo \*

The project would be implemented within the framework of the agreement between Serbia and Kosovo reached on 19 April 2013 under the auspices of the European Union. The authorities of Kosovo and the international community, notably the European Commission, have shown a great interest in the involvement of the Council of Europe in the field of local democracy.

### **iii. Co-operation with neighbouring regions of the Council of Europe**

The Congress' proposals are part of the Council of Europe's policy towards neighbouring regions and are a response to requests received from the countries concerned.

- **Morocco**

The Congress is continuing to co-operate with Moroccan authorities, particularly following the adoption by the Parliament at the beginning of July of the draft law defining principles of territorial delineation of local governments, which should be translated concretely into the country's new territorial organisation.

The Congress has participated in this debate on advanced regionalisation by providing its expertise to the Consultative Commission on Regionalisation since its creation in 2010 and through a reinforced dialogue with Moroccan parliamentarians and local authorities.

Moroccan authorities have requested Council of Europe support in the setting up of the Association of the Presidents of the Town Councils created on 27 May 2013. A joint proposal from the Congress and the Centre of Expertise on the local administration reform was drawn up at the end of May: the Congress' contribution concerns local elected representatives' awareness about good governance and their role and responsibility in a context of wider autonomy, and includes assistance in the development of the new association's activities.

The principle of concrete co-operation was discussed on 3 October at the World Summit of UCLG (United Cities and Local Governments) in Rabat by Jean-Claude Frécon, President of the Chamber of Local Authorities, and Jean-Philippe Bozouls, Executive Secretary of the Chamber of Local Authorities, with Fouad Omari, President of the Association, and Abdelouahed Ourzik, Governor, Director of legal affairs, of studies and of co-operation at the Ministry of Home Affairs, Directorate general of local communities. The Congress representatives, including Marc Cools, Vice-President of the Congress and President of the Association of the City and the Municipalities of the Capital Region Brussels and Anders Knape, Vice-President of the Congress, Deputy President of CEMR (Council of European Municipalities and Regions) and President of the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR), also met Omar Azziman, Advisor to the King, who co-ordinated the Consultative Commission on Regionalisation's work.

Further informal contacts between Moroccan mayors and Congress members took place during the 2013 Lisbon Forum (6-7 November). As a follow-up, the Congress will be represented in the seminar on improving women's access to political life in Morocco organised by the North-South Centre on 19 December 2013 in Tetouan (Morocco).

- **Tunisia**

The Congress continued its contacts with the Tunisian authorities in the framework of the Council of Europe's institutional aid. It participated in several consultation meetings between the representatives of the National Constitutional Assembly National Constituent Assembly (ANC) of Tunisia and the European Commission for Democracy Through Law (Venice Commission), in particular on Chapter VII of the final draft concerning local powers. In this regard, the Congress' comments - formulated by Christian Behrendt, Professor at the University of Liege, Belgium – were included within the official comments of the Venice Commission, released on 17 July 2013.

A study including an analysis of the situation of local and regional democracy in Tunisia and recommendations and a report on other intergovernmental organisations' activities in Tunisia in this field is currently being drawn up with the participation of Néjl Baccouche, Professor of Law in the

University of Sfax (Tunisia), and Christian Behrendt, Professor of Constitutional Law in the University of Liege (Belgium). This study on local democracy and the co-operation project will be presented for comments to the new Tunisian authorities in due course.

Nevertheless, the future of the constitution, finalised on 1 June 2013 and awaiting ratification, depends on the political juncture.

## APPENDICES

### APPENDICE I – Resolutions on monitoring, observation of elections, post-monitoring and post-observation

25<sup>th</sup> SESSION

Strasbourg, 29-31 October 2013

### Observation of local and regional elections – strategy and rules of the Congress

#### RESOLUTION 306 (2010) REV<sup>4</sup>

1. The rights of citizens to vote – and to be elected – at periodic, genuine democratic elections are internationally recognised human rights. Genuine democratic elections cannot be achieved unless a wide range of other human rights and fundamental freedoms can be exercised without discrimination. They serve to resolve peacefully the competition for political power within a country. They are part of a process to establish democratic governance. Like other human rights and like democracy in general, they cannot be achieved without the protection of the rule of law.

2. The citizens' rights to exercise their democratic choice in a universal, equal, free, secret and direct suffrage is above all the grounding of political participation at territorial level that is enshrined in the preamble to the Additional Protocol to the European Charter of Local Self-Government on the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority adopted in November 2009<sup>5</sup> ("...the right to participate in the conduct of public affairs is one of the democratic principles that are shared by all member States of the Council of Europe").

3. Election observation – as a matter of concern for international organisations – has become widely accepted and plays an important role in providing accurate and impartial assessments about the nature of electoral processes. It has the potential to enhance the integrity of electoral processes, by deterring and exposing irregularities and fraud and by providing recommendations for improving processes. It can promote public confidence, promote electoral participation and mitigate the potential for election-related conflict. It also serves to enhance international understanding through the sharing of experiences and information about democratic development.

4. The practice of observing elections in the Council of Europe began after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, as part of the application process of a number of new democracies. With the objective of supplementing the work done by the Parliamentary Assembly regarding national and presidential elections, the Congress – as guardian of territorial democracy – was charged with observing local and regional elections. Since 1990 the Congress has carried out more than 100 election observation missions in Europe and, occasionally, beyond.

5. Having regard to:

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<sup>4</sup> Debated and adopted by the Congress on 30 October 2013, 2<sup>nd</sup> sitting (see Document [CG\(25\)13](#) explanatory memorandum), rapporteur: Lars O. Molin, Sweden (L, EPP/CCE).

<sup>5</sup> CETS No. 207



a. the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;

b. the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms;

c. the European Charter of Local Self-Government and its Additional Protocol on the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority;

d. the Statutory Resolution CM/Res(2011)2 adopted by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers, defining observation of local and/or regional elections as one of the priorities of Congress' action;

e. the Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters (2002) of the European Commission on Democracy through Law of the Council of Europe (hereafter "Venice Commission"), to its Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation (2004);

f. Congress Recommendation 124 (2003) on "the Code of Good Practice in electoral matters";

g. Congress Resolution 233 (2007) on "co-operation between the Congress and national associations of local and regional authorities";

h. Congress Resolution 274 (2008) on "Congress policy in observing local and regional elections",

6. the Congress underlines the importance of election observation at local and regional level and its complementarity to the monitoring of implementation of the European Charter of Local Self-Government which constitutes the cornerstone of local democracy in Europe.

7. The Congress refers to the specific role of local and regional elected representatives as observers of local and regional elections and stresses:

a. that this contributes to the legitimacy and credibility of electoral processes at the grassroots level;

b. that the state and conditions of electoral processes at the grassroots level are assessed by local and regional elected political representatives of the 47 Council of Europe member states on a peer-to-peer basis.

8. The Congress notes that, in principle, observation of local and regional elections shall not be limited to certain countries. In accordance with the above-mentioned complementarity of election observation to the monitoring of implementation of the European Charter of Local Self-Government, observation of local and regional elections is relevant with regard to the entire family of Council of Europe member states.

9 The Congress affirms its interest in observing local and regional elections specifically in those countries where the monitoring process revealed shortcomings and/or issues of concern with regard to local and regional democracy.

10. The Congress organises an election observation mission only following the invitation of the authorities of the country concerned.

11. With regard to those countries where the Congress' monitoring process revealed certain weaknesses with regard to local and regional democracy, the Congress will adopt an active attitude and express its interest to be invited by those authorities to observe local or regional elections.

12. The Congress, in order to make an accurate assessment of the conduct of elections, is of the opinion that it is not enough to evaluate the organisational framework of elections. With a view to achieving this goal, the Congress decided in 2010 to adopt a policy for the widening of the scope of observation of local and regional elections in Council of Europe member states. It examines the whole election environment including elements which are key for the functioning of democracy and for genuinely democratic elections, notably:

a. the political landscape of the country (historical background, political system, electoral system);

- b. the legal framework (constitution, laws, electoral code);
- c. the role of the media (freedom of expression, media pluralism);
- d. the financing of the parties and of the election campaign;
- e. the election campaign (visibility, media coverage, balance, voter education);
- f. the post-election situation (formation of the local/regional government, role attributed to the opposition, follow-up of complaints and appeals);
- g. other elements of possible relevance for the elections.

13. The Congress is of the opinion that, in accordance with the “Rules for the practical organisation of Congress election observation missions” specified in the present resolution, with regard to a pertinent follow-up to the recommendations that arise from the observation of local and regional elections, a post-observation procedure may be put into place in certain cases.

14. The Congress and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe will exchange, on a regular basis, every two years, the conclusions of election observation reports in accordance with the decision taken at the 43<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Council for Democratic Elections (Venice Commission).

15. The Congress, aware of its institutional responsibility within the Council of Europe for consistently organising high-quality election observation missions according to recognised international standards, will continue to ensure that Congress members who take part in such missions will benefit from specialised training.

16. In the same way as it strengthened its co-operation with national associations, the Congress may invite the EU Committee of the Regions to join the Congress delegation on its election observation missions after receiving the invitation of the state in which the election observation takes place. Reciprocity between both institutions will be guaranteed when the report is presented to the Congress and the EU Committee of the Regions, as both the rapporteur of the Congress and a speaker of the EU Committee of the Regions will be invited when the report is debated.

17. In the interest of complementarity between the Congress and other international institutions involved in election observation, co-operation will be maintained and strengthened with the OSCE/ODIHR when the latter is observing local and/or regional elections in a country which invited the Congress to observe such elections.

18. In pursuance of Congress Resolution 353 (2013) REV on Congress post-monitoring and post-observation of elections: Developing political dialogue, the Monitoring Committee of the Congress examines and adopts the report following an election observation mission and approves the resolution and recommendation for adoption by the Congress Session (or by its Chambers).

19. In pursuance of Congress Resolution 353 (2013) REV, at the request of the Congress Monitoring Committee, the Bureau of the Congress may propose to national authorities to whom the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers addressed a Congress recommendation on observation of local or/and regional elections, an post-election observation procedure which comprises different steps, according to the aforementioned resolution.

20. In pursuance of Article 2.5 of the Statutory Resolution CM/Res(2011)2, recommendations shall be transmitted as appropriate to the Parliamentary Assembly and/or the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers as well as to European and international organisations and institutions. The recommendations shall also be transmitted to the head and the secretary of the national delegation to the Congress. In addition, the reports and recommendations will be made available to interested Council of Europe bodies, notably to the Venice Commission.

\* \* \*

In order to implement the present resolution, the Congress adopts the following rules for the practical organisation of Congress election observation missions and the Code of conduct for Congress observers.

#### **A. Rules for the practical organisation of Congress election observation missions**

1. Following an invitation by the authorities of a country to observe local and/or regional elections the Congress Bureau decides on the acceptance of the invitation and on the scale of the operation (assessment mission, pre-election mission, observation mission). The Congress is free to emphasise the different steps. In the absence of a Bureau meeting, the Congress President will take the necessary decision, after consultation with the Presidents of the Chambers.

2. The Bureau of the Congress may also decide to send a letter, expressing the interest in observing local or regional elections, to the authorities of the country in which such a vote is scheduled, in particular in countries where the monitoring process revealed shortcomings and/or issues of concern with regard to local and regional democracy, as well as, on the contrary, cases of innovation or good practice.

3. A draft observation programme will be drawn up by the Congress Secretariat. The Permanent Representative of the country concerned, the head and the secretary of the national delegation to the Congress will be duly informed. In general, the Congress Secretariat will provide for a regular correspondence with all the relevant stakeholders, in particular with the head of the Council of Europe outpost, in countries where such an office does exist.

4. The Congress Secretariat must ensure high-quality information for the members of the election observation delegation.

5. The Congress Secretariat will send a call for interest, including the application form, to the email addresses of all Congress members. Secretaries of national delegations will receive a copy. Congress members who express their interest in taking part in the mission and send back the form within a given deadline will be taken into account. Candidatures from members of national associations whose associations agree to cover their costs shall also be taken into consideration.

6. Based on candidatures received within the required deadline, a draft delegation including the delegation's leadership will be proposed by the Congress Secretary General including, normally, between 5 and 20 members.

7. The composition of delegations is determined according to an appointment system taking into account a balanced representation of the different political groups of the Congress, gender balance and a fair geographical representation and also taking into account the chronological order of candidacies put forward by Congress members.

8. In order to ensure a meaningful participation in the work of the mission, the candidate's language skills (in at least one of the official languages of the Council of Europe) will be taken into consideration. In addition, experience in election observation and participation in training sessions are amongst the criteria.

9. Adequate language skills (in at least one of the two official languages of the Council of Europe), conversation techniques and capacities in political dialogue as well as experience in election observation and monitoring activities as well as participation in training sessions of the Congress determine the appointment of the head of delegation.

10. Observation delegations should not include Congress members from countries with special relations with the country where elections are going to be monitored.

11. Members taking part in a pre-election visit are expected to also be available for the election observation mission.

12. The rapporteurs of the Monitoring Committee for the country where elections are monitored shall be ex-officio members of the election observation delegation, but shall not have the right to act as head/rapporteur of the election observation delegation.

13. On the basis of the proposal provided by the Congress Secretary General, the Bureau will decide on the delegation including the head of delegation and rapporteur (both functions can be carried out by the same person), in accordance with the aforementioned principles. In the absence of a Bureau meeting, the President of the Congress, in consultation with the Presidents of the Chambers, will take the necessary decisions.

14. In order to inform the media about the preliminary conclusions of the Congress election observation delegation, a press conference – chaired by the head of the delegation – will be held the day following the Election Day. Members of a Congress election observation delegation are expected to be present at this press conference.

15. If the Congress is not the only international institution to observe local or regional elections in the respective country, an IEOM (“International Election Observation Mission”) may be formed together with such institutions, notably with the OSCE/ODIHR. This implies – according to standard procedure – a joint press conference on the day following the Election Day and a joint preliminary statement. However, if, after an election, a joint final assessment cannot be achieved in the framework of the IEOM, the Congress reserves itself the right to hold – if necessary – its own press conference making public its own assessment.

16. If a “joint IEOM” is formed together with other international organisations, all related activities (press conferences, drafting of media releases or political statements) have to be carried out in compliance with Congress requirements (the corporate identity of the Congress mission has to be retained, the specific role and nature of Congress observers should be highlighted, the scale of Congress operations must not be reduced and political messages by the Congress must not be distorted).

17. The Report will be drawn up by the rapporteur with the support of the Congress secretariat and reflects the opinion of the members of the entire delegation. The Report must be comprehensive, noting positive and negative factors, distinguishing between significant and insignificant factors. It should identify patterns that could have an impact on the integrity of the election process and on the genuineness of the vote.

18. The Report must also take account of Resolutions/ Recommendations previously adopted by the Congress, including those arising from monitoring Reports with regard to the country concerned as well as relevant opinions and recommendations from other Council of Europe bodies and international organisations and institutions.

## **B. Code of conduct for Congress observers**

1. Congress members taking part in election observation missions have to have signed the Congress’ Declaration of Principle. They shall avoid, in the framework of the accomplishment of such missions, conflicts between any actual or potential financial or any other interests, on a professional, personal or family level, in connection with the country concerned by such an election observation. If a member is unable to avoid such a conflict of interest it should be made known to the Congress Secretariat. Any gifts or similar benefits of a value in excess of 200 Euros that a member has accepted in the last 24 months from the authorities of the country concerned shall be also registered with the Secretariat. During such missions, Congress members shall avoid any situation that could appear to be a conflict of interest or receiving an inappropriate payment or gift.

2. Members of Congress election observation missions should always stress that the rights of citizens to vote (and to be elected) at periodic, genuinely democratic elections are internationally recognised human rights. In particular, they should comply with the following rules:

a. to respect the sovereignty of the host country and to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms of its people at the same time;

- b.* to respect the laws of the host country (and to follow lawful instructions from the country's governmental, security or electoral authorities);
- c.* to note if laws, regulations and actions of state/governmental/electoral officials unduly burden or obstruct the exercise of election;
- d.* to protect the integrity of the election observation mission (to follow the instructions of the Congress' delegation leadership, to attend the required training sessions, briefings, debriefings, to fully dedicate themselves to the observation mission, to read the background materials provided, to become familiar with the legal framework for elections and with other relevant rules and regulations);
- e.* to maintain strict political impartiality at all times (to avoid expressing or showing any bias or preference in relation to national authorities, political parties, candidates, issues etc.);
- f.* to avoid obstructing the election process (to take note of significant problems, irregularities, fraud etc. – but not to intervene, not to give instructions to election officials, political party representatives or other observers);
- g.* to ask questions of election officials, political party representatives and other observers (without obstructing the election process);
- h.* to maintain accuracy of observations and professionalism in drawing conclusions (observations should be comprehensive, noting positive and negative factors, distinguishing between significant and insignificant factors; observations should identify patterns that could have an impact on the integrity of the election process);
- i.* to keep a well-documented record of the observation (in particular by using the Election Evaluation Guide provided by the Venice Commission and the questionnaire);
- j.* to refrain from making statements/declarations to the media, via social networks or in public on conclusions drawn from the observation before the final statement of the mission (possible requests from the media have to be clarified with the Congress' delegation leadership); statements/declarations as described should not contradict or conflict the overall final assessment of the elections;
- k.* to co-operate with other international election observers, notably with OSCE/ODIHR; it should be pointed out that English is the de facto working language of OSCE/ODIHR election observation missions.

## PROCEDURES FOR MONITORING THE OBLIGATIONS AND COMMITMENTS ENTERED INTO BY THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE MEMBER STATES IN RESPECT OF THEIR RATIFICATION OF THE EUROPEAN CHARTER OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT (ETS NO. 122)

### RESOLUTION 307 (2010) REV2<sup>6</sup>

1. The European Charter of Local Self-Government (hereafter “the Charter”) is the authoritative legal instrument guaranteeing respect for a minimum of rights forming the first European platform for local self-government.

2. The Congress refers to its Resolution 31 (1996) on Guiding principles for the action of the Congress when preparing reports on local and regional democracy in member states and applicant states.

3. It also recalls the Committee of Ministers’ Statutory Resolution CM/Res(2011)2<sup>7</sup>, which stipulates that it is for the Congress to monitor implementation of the Charter by the countries having ratified it, and states, *inter alia*, that:

*“2-3. The Congress shall prepare on a regular basis country-by-country reports on the situation of local and regional democracy in all member States and in States which have applied to join the Council of Europe, and shall ensure, in particular, that the principles of the European Charter of Local Self-Government are implemented (...)*

*2-5. Recommendations and opinions of the Congress shall be sent as appropriate to the Parliamentary Assembly and/or the Committee of Ministers as well as to European and international organisations and institutions. Resolutions and other adopted texts which do not entail possible action by the Assembly and/or the Committee of Ministers shall be transmitted to them for their information.”*

4. The Congress monitoring procedure is a crucial tool for checking that Council of Europe countries which have ratified the European Charter of Local Self-Government honour their commitments. In addition to checking in respect of states’ commitments, the procedure makes it possible to establish open and constructive dialogue between the Congress and the national, local and regional authorities of member states, via impartial and independent rapporteurs appointed on the basis of objective criteria. This monitoring procedure facilitates open and constructive dialogue between the Congress and the national, local and regional authorities of the member states

5. The Congress believes it necessary to organise these monitoring procedures on a regular basis in each member state which ratified the European Charter of Local Self-Government. Given the ever-changing nature of local and regional democracy, it believes that it should be possible to organise these visits approximately every five years.

6. The Congress stresses how important it is for the Council of Europe to ensure that the commitments entered into by all its member states are fully honoured.

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<sup>6</sup> Debated and adopted by the Congress on 30 October 2013, 2<sup>nd</sup> sitting (see Document [CG\(25\)13](#) explanatory memorandum), rapporteur: Lars O. Molin, Sweden (L, EPP/CCE).

<sup>7</sup> Statutory Resolution (2011) – extracts from Article 2.

7. Pursuant to the aforementioned texts, the Congress must ensure that it monitors the commitments entered into by the member states having ratified the European Charter of Local Self-Government and/or its Additional Protocol on the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority<sup>8</sup>.

8. Furthermore, pursuant to Resolution 299 (2010), the Reference Framework for Regional Democracy will be taken into consideration.<sup>9</sup>

9. Alongside the monitoring activities vis-à-vis the European Charter of Local Self-Government, the Congress will promote the Council of Europe conventions inasmuch as they entail obligations in respect of local and regional authorities.

10. For the purposes of supporting the development of local and regional democracy in the territory covered by the members states of the Council of Europe and promoting at this level the values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law, the Bureau of the Congress shall decide to implement the monitoring programme of the European Charter of Local Self-Government proposed by its Monitoring Committee as part of systematic monitoring exercises (monitoring the Charter in its entirety), under specific monitoring exercises (monitoring a particular aspect of the Charter) or by means of fact-finding missions (clarifying a specific question allegedly in breach of one of the provisions of the Charter).

11. The Bureau of the Congress shall instruct its Monitoring Committee to organise monitoring procedures on the honouring of these commitments in this/these country(ies). The monitoring procedure is also geared to verifying the content of any declarations made by the State, under Article 12 of the Charter, when depositing the instrument of ratification, and, where applicable, exploring with the authorities the possibility of ratifying, at a later date, the article(s) to which their declaration related.

12. On the basis of a list of candidates, the Chair of the Monitoring Committee shall appoint two rapporteurs from among its members, namely one full member or alternate from its Chamber of Regions and one full member or alternate from its Chamber of Local Authorities. Appointment of the rapporteurs shall comply with Article 2 of the rules governing the organisation of Congress monitoring procedures, as appended to the present resolution.

13. The Congress believes that, in the interest of ensuring compliance with the criteria of independence and impartiality of the rapporteurs, which are the very keys to the effectiveness of a monitoring mission, a rapporteur's mandate may not exceed five years and they may not be tasked with monitoring the same country for the five years following that initial period.

14. For the sake of the smooth running of the monitoring procedure, the committee may decide to extend the mandate of one of the rapporteurs, where there are grounds and if it is possible, for six months at the most, in particular to enable the rapporteur to present a report already entered on the agenda of a Congress part-session.

15. For the purposes of the present resolution, the mandate of rapporteurs shall commence on the date of their appointment.

16. The delegation shall be assisted by a consultant drawn from the Group of Independent Experts on the European Charter of Local Self-Government or by an independent consultant who has specialist knowledge of the country to be visited and substantial knowledge of the Charter and of local and regional democracy issues in Council of Europe member states.

17. The monitoring delegations shall meet with the authorities responsible for local and regional democracy and human rights issues, at the national, regional and local level, as well as any

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<sup>8</sup> "Charter" is taken to mean the European Charter of Local Self-Government (ETS No. 122), including the additional protocol thereto (CETS No. 207).

<sup>9</sup> See the Final Declaration adopted by the European Ministers responsible for Local and Regional Authorities on 17 November 2009 in Utrecht (Netherlands) as part of their 16th Ministerial Conference. It should be noted that the Reference Framework is not a binding legal instrument.

individuals liable to provide the delegation with relevant information under the procedure for monitoring commitments entered into by ratifying the Charter.<sup>10</sup>

18. The report must be drafted, as far as possible, within six weeks following the visit.

19. The report on the situation of local and regional democracy in a country to which a monitoring or fact-finding visit has been made shall be drafted by the rapporteurs in collaboration with the consultant and the secretariat.

20. It must also take into account the recommendations and/or resolutions previously adopted by the Congress, particularly recommendations addressed to the country visited. The report shall also take into consideration the political context in which the monitoring visit took place and examine the situation of local and regional democracy in the light of other relevant Council of Europe texts<sup>11</sup> ratified by the country in question.

21. Once validated by the rapporteurs, the draft report shall be sent to the authorities of the country concerned and all talking partners with whom the delegation met, so that they may respond and send back their comments. The rapporteurs may use these contributions to amend the text of their report, which will be submitted to the Monitoring Committee for adoption. They may decide to publish the comments in an appendix to their report in order to illustrate a different viewpoint from that set out in the report.

22. The report shall be accompanied by a draft recommendation and if necessary a draft resolution.

23. Pursuant to Rule 42-5 of the Rules of Procedure of the Congress and its Chambers,<sup>12</sup> draft reports, recommendations and, where applicable, resolutions, shall be submitted for adoption to the Monitoring Committee, and then for adoption by the Congress at a plenary session or a session of the Chambers.

24. Pursuant to Article 2-5 of the Statutory Resolution mentioned above, the recommendation shall be transmitted to the Committee of Ministers and to the Parliamentary Assembly.

25. Rules governing the organisation of Congress monitoring procedures and a Code of Good Conduct for monitoring delegation members are appended to the present resolution.

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## **A. Rules governing the organisation of Congress monitoring procedures pursuant to Resolution 307 (2010) REV2 and the Code of Good Conduct**

### **I. Rules governing the organisation of Congress monitoring procedures**

Pursuant to Resolution 307 (2010) REV2, the purpose of the present rules is to define the arrangements for organising procedures for monitoring the commitments of Council of Europe member states having signed and ratified the European Charter of Local Self-Government<sup>13</sup> with the aim of achieving the objective set forth in the aforementioned resolution.

This procedure applies in the same way whatever type of monitoring is being implemented, ie systematic monitoring (monitoring the Charter in its entirety), specific monitoring (monitoring a

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. the rules establishing the practical procedure for organising monitoring visits (appended to the present resolution).

<sup>11</sup> Such as the Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level (ETS No. 144), the Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ETS No. 148), the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (ETS No. 157), Protocol No. 3 to the Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities (CETS No. 206), etc.

<sup>12</sup> As revised by the Congress at its 15th Plenary Session on 28 May 2008 (Resolution 256 (2008) and complemented by the Standing Committee on 2 December 2008 (Resolution 273 (2008)).

<sup>13</sup> ETS No. 122.



particular aspect of the Charter) and fact-finding missions (clarification of a specific issue which may lead to infringement of a Charter provision).

Each year the Monitoring Committee shall submit to the Bureau of the Congress, for adoption, the programme of visits scheduled under the Charter monitoring programme.

## **1. The monitoring procedure**

The monitoring procedure shall be carried out approximately every five years in each Council of Europe member state having signed and ratified the European Charter of Local Self-Government. It shall comprise five phases:

- a. the monitoring visit;
- b. the consultation procedure with the authorities encountered on the preliminary draft report;
- c. examination of the report by the Monitoring Committee and the Congress and adoption of a recommendation by the Congress during the sessions. If the rapporteurs think it necessary, they may propose a draft resolution for adoption by the Congress;
- d. transmission for debate to the Committee of Ministers, which may decide on its subsequent transmission to the authorities of the country concerned;
- e. an invitation issued to the authorities of the country concerned to address the session of the Congress or the session of one of its Chambers.

This serves as a basis for future cooperation activities to come.

## **2. Composition of the monitoring delegation**

A monitoring delegation shall comprise two rapporteurs, one on local democracy and one on regional democracy, one consultant, and one or more members of the Congress Secretariat. The delegation is generally accompanied by interpreters to facilitate communication between the language of the country in question and the delegation's working language (French or English).

The whole procedure shall be governed by the principles of independence, impartiality and equity, starting with the appointment of the rapporteurs and the consultant, which shall be based on geographical and political criteria geared to preserving the objectivity of the delegation which will conduct the monitoring visit.

The rapporteurs shall be appointed from among the Full or Alternate members of the Monitoring Committee of the Congress who put forward their names as candidates.

Upon express derogation by the Committee Chair, a member of the Congress who is not a member of the Monitoring Committee may be appointed rapporteur.

Members of the Monitoring Committee who wish to be rapporteurs on local or regional democracy in a given country must submit their application to the secretariat of the Committee for the attention of the Committee Chair.

The rapporteurs must be appointed in a manner that ensures a balanced representation of the political groups and the group of members not registered with a political group of the Congress.

Candidates for monitoring exercises may be appointed for only one monitoring exercise at a time. The criteria for the composition of the delegation are as follows:

*The rapporteurs and the consultant must not be nationals of the country concerned by the monitoring procedure, or a bordering country or a country which has a particular relationship with the country to be monitored;*

*Members of the Monitoring Committee are ineligible as rapporteurs for a given country if they have already been rapporteurs in respect of this country during the five years preceding their candidature;*

*The two rapporteurs must also belong to different political groups (or be non-registered);*

*The delegation's working language can be either French or English.*

The Chair of the Monitoring Committee shall verify the conformity of the candidates' profile with the aforementioned criteria (see Rule 12 of the present Rules), and shall appoint the rapporteurs on local democracy and on regional democracy. He shall notify the appointments to the Monitoring Committee at its following meeting.

The maximum duration of the rapporteurs' mandate shall be five years, dating from their appointment.

A rapporteur's mandate may exceptionally be extended for a maximum of six months, on grounds of the timetable for the presentation of the monitoring report at a Congress session.

The delegation shall be strictly limited to the rapporteurs, the consultant and the member(s) of the Secretariat, in accordance with Rule 3 of the present Rules and Resolution 307 (2010) REV2. Consequently, delegation members must not be accompanied by assistants or other persons whose participation is not explicitly provided for in Resolution 307 (2010) REV2.

The secretariat shall suggest dates for the visit to the rapporteurs and the consultant in line with the Monitoring Committee's general timetable of activities, the respective commitments of the members of the monitoring delegation and the availability of the delegation's talking partners in the country visited. If the members of the delegation agree on the dates for the visit, the Congress secretariat shall inform the country's Permanent Representation with the Council of Europe by letter from the Secretary General of the Congress. The rapporteurs and the consultant shall undertake to respect the dates established for the mission and refrain from any other commitment on these dates.

Monitoring of local and regional democracy cannot take place in a country which is currently chairing the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. Similarly, a monitoring report on a given country cannot be debated in session during this country's chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. Lastly, the occurrence of a serious political crisis in a country in which a monitoring visit is scheduled may justify postponing the mission. The Monitoring Committee may propose to the Bureau of the Congress, for decision, postponing a monitoring mission, notably where there is a risk of interference between the visit and the holding of elections in the country in question.

Where two members of the Monitoring Committee have been appointed rapporteurs for a country by the Committee Chair and the consultant has agreed to provide technical assistance to the delegation, the rapporteurs and the consultant shall enter into a working relationship with the secretariat of the Monitoring Committee for the duration of the monitoring procedure.

The rapporteurs and the consultant must ensure proper communication with the Congress Secretariat, which shall be informed in advance of any meetings or briefings organised with representatives of the authorities of the country visited or with members of the national delegation to the Congress.

### **3. Working languages for the monitoring exercise**

The working languages used for monitoring activities shall be the two official languages of the Council of Europe (French and English). Consequently, the rapporteurs and the consultant shall be chosen in such a way as to ensure that the members of the delegation can speak, communicate among themselves, and read and write in the official language pre-selected as the delegation's working language.

The working documents intended for monitoring activities will be available in English or in French.

### **4. The monitoring visit programme**

The Congress Secretariat shall organise the visit. It shall draw up the programme with the rapporteurs in conjunction with the head and secretary of the national delegation to the Congress, the national associations of local and regional authorities where applicable, the co-ordinating bodies of federate entities and lastly, with the country's Permanent Representation with the Council of Europe.

Once the rapporteurs have approved the programme, the working meetings shall be planned and organised by the secretariat, which shall manage the specific logistics for the visit.

The visit programme must make provision for meetings with the authorities responsible for questions of local and regional democracy or dealing with these questions, and also with the officials of the administrations concerned, notably:

the minister(s) responsible for local and regional authorities;  
members of parliament (national and/or regional) – particularly those responsible for local or regional issues;  
local and regional elected representatives, including the Congress delegation, the mayor of the capital city and mayors of small and medium-sized municipalities;  
the president of the Constitutional Court and the national member of the Venice Commission;  
the national, regional and/or local ombudsman;  
a specialist on questions linked to the application of the Charter in the country concerned;  
associations representing local and regional authorities;  
representatives of civil society from non-governmental organisations, trade unions of the country visited, the media, etc.

Generally speaking, the rapporteurs can meet any individual whom they consider useful to interview for their task.

The consultant shall contribute to the preparation of the visit by drawing up a list of questions to be broached with the talking partners mentioned in the programme concerning problems linked to the application of the Charter. This list shall also include the questions raised during the previous visit to the country. The consultant must also take into account any declarations made by the state when ratifying the Charter, and of the current political context.

The list of topics which the delegation wishes to broach shall be sent, at least one week prior to the visit, to the permanent representation to the Council of Europe of the state concerned as regards government interlocutors, and to the talking partners listed in the programme.

## **5. Monitoring visits**

### *i. Number of visits*

The monitoring procedure shall in principle comprise one visit to the country concerned. If they consider it necessary, the rapporteurs may conduct a second visit subject to the agreement of the Monitoring Committee and after having informed the Bureau.

### *ii. Running of the monitoring visit*

The secretariat shall supply all the delegation members with all the documents relevant to the visit, namely the programme, the substantive documents, information to help prepare the questions for talking partners (prepared in co-operation with the consultant), and information to help the rapporteurs introduce the exchanges during each visit.

These documents are designed to prepare the rapporteurs in such a way that they possess sound knowledge of the situation of local and regional democracy in the country visited, and that their questions are as relevant as possible to the country's political and institutional context.

Before the first meeting scheduled on the programme, the secretariat shall organise a briefing of the delegation, generally at the hotel in which the monitoring delegation is staying. This briefing shall be attended by both rapporteurs and the consultant. The briefing is vital to the proper overall running of the visit, because it provides an opportunity for clarifying specific points and apportioning speaking time between the rapporteurs, anticipating any difficulties and organising the running of each meeting listed on the programme. For example, the briefing serves to define the roles of each participant during the meetings, particularly deciding which rapporteur is to introduce the delegation, ask the first question and sum up at the end of the meeting. This meeting also helps ensure the correct

pronunciation of the names of persons to be interviewed or of municipalities to which they may have to refer during their exchanges of views.

The rapporteurs are the main talking partners for the authorities encountered, and they must introduce the delegation and ask the questions. The consultant and the members of the secretariat can also put questions to the talking partners at the invitation of the rapporteurs.

A short preparatory meeting is also scheduled with the interpreters before the first meeting in order to ensure that they have all the necessary information and the terminology used for the Congress's work on the Charter, the proper pronunciation of the names and exact titles of delegation members and talking partners.

After the last meeting scheduled in the programme, the secretariat shall organise a debriefing meeting with the delegation members before they split up. This working meeting is geared to establishing an initial assessment, identifying the salient points of the visit, and listing the problems noted vis-à-vis the application of the Charter, the good practices registered and the main thrust of the recommendations to be addressed to the authorities of the country visited. This meeting enables participants to take stock of the situation with an eye to the draft report, so that the consultant has all the data necessary for preparing a preliminary draft reflecting the rapporteurs' final assessment as closely as possible.

## **6. Preparation of the draft report, draft recommendation and draft resolution**

After the visit, the consultant has six weeks to send the secretariat of the Congress a written contribution for preparing the report on the situation of local and regional democracy in the country visited, to be presented by the rapporteurs. This contribution must be drawn up in French or English, in accordance with the outline report applicable to all monitoring reports, drawing on the conclusions discussed at the debriefing meeting. Furthermore, it must comply with the practical specifications set out in the contract letter drawn up by the secretariat and signed by the parties. Beyond the quality of the legal analysis, the consultant must endeavour to reflect in his/her contribution the thrusts indicated by the rapporteurs for the preparation of the report.

The report must also take account of the recommendations and/or resolutions previously adopted by the Congress, particularly the recommendations previously addressed to the country visited. It must also take into consideration the political context in which the monitoring visit took place and examine the situation of local and regional democracy in the light of other relevant Council of Europe texts<sup>14</sup> ratified by the country in question.

After discussion with the rapporteurs and possible transmission of the text among the rapporteurs, the secretariat and the consultant, and once the rapporteurs' agreement on the preliminary draft report has been obtained, the latter shall be sent to all the talking partners encountered during the visit for comments. This consultation procedure shall include a deadline for sending all the comments received to the rapporteurs for examination. Factual errors will be corrected, and comments or proposed amendments to the rapport leaving room for interpretation or appraisal will be left to the discretion of the rapporteurs, who may decide to integrate these comments, in whole or in part, directly in the preliminary draft report, or to reject it, or else to append it to their report.

Under the authority of the rapporteurs and on the basis of the conclusions of the report, the text of the preliminary draft recommendation shall be drawn up by the secretariat. It shall then be submitted to the rapporteurs for final agreement.

The draft report and the preliminary draft recommendation are then debated by the Monitoring Committee, which shall adopt the draft report (which becomes final 15 days after the Committee meeting) and approve the preliminary draft recommendation, which shall be submitted at the Congress Session for adoption. The latter text may be amended in accordance with the formal procedure set out in Rule 34 of the Rules of Procedure of the Congress and its Chambers.

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<sup>14</sup> Such as the Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level (ETS No. 144), the Charter for Regional and Minority Languages (ETS No. 148), the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (ETS No. 157), Protocol No. 3 to the Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities (CETS No. 206), etc.

After adoption by the Congress, the Congress recommendation shall be sent to the Committee of Ministers, which may decide to transmit it to the national authorities of the monitored member state for implementation.

## **7. Post-monitoring procedure**

**The rules described above shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to the post-monitoring procedure.**<sup>15</sup>

## **8. Adoption and follow-up of recommendations**

In pursuance of Rule 42-5 of the Rules of Procedure of the Congress and its Chambers<sup>16</sup>, the preliminary draft recommendation and, where applicable, resolution, shall be submitted to the Monitoring Committee for examination and adoption.

The draft report, recommendation and, where applicable, resolution, shall be presented by the rapporteurs and considered by the Congress with a view to their adoption during its session or a chamber sitting.

In pursuance of Article 2-5 of the Statutory Resolution of the Committee of Ministers, the recommendation shall be transmitted to the Committee of Ministers for debate. It may decide to transmit it to the authorities of the state in question and to the Parliamentary Assembly.

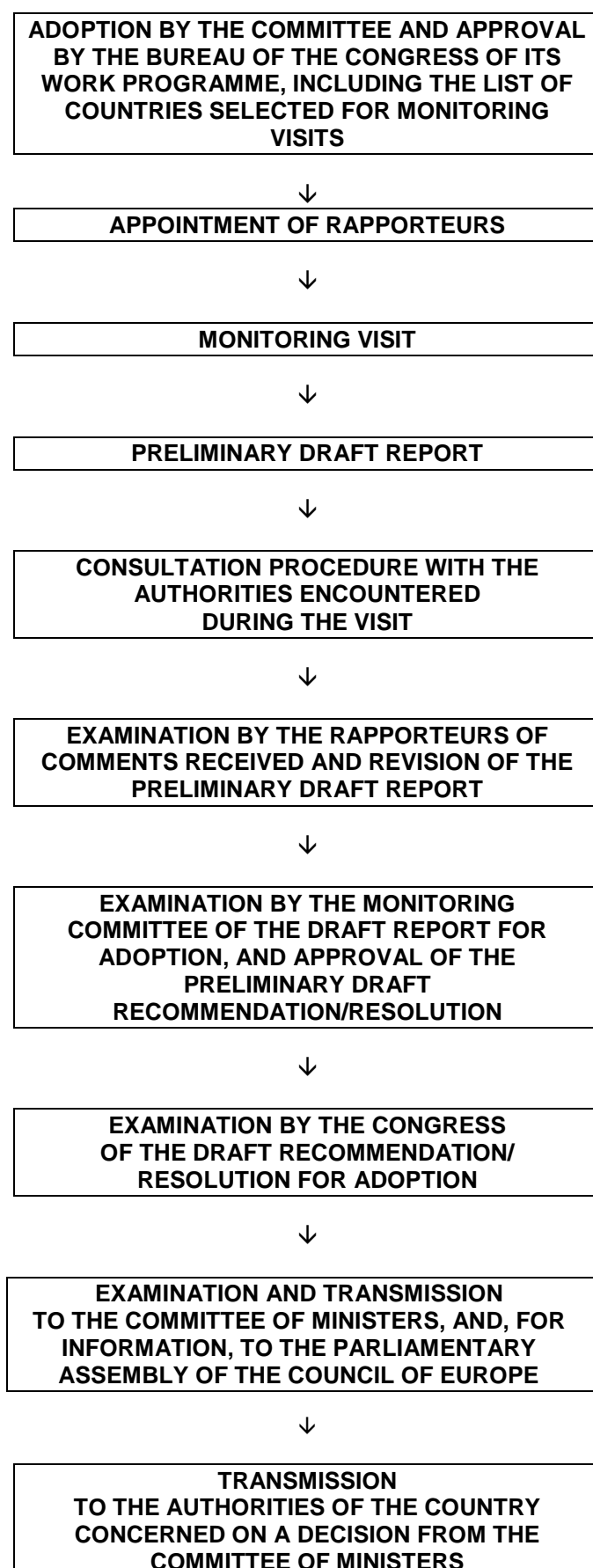
The implementation of the recommendation shall be monitored by the member states concerned and by the Congress, as well as by the Council of Europe intergovernmental bodies responsible for local and regional democracy under the continuous dialogue established with the authorities during the visit.

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<sup>15</sup> See Resolution 353 (2013) REV “Congress post-monitoring and post-observation of elections: developing political dialogue” Jean-Marie BELLIARD, France (R, EPP/CCE)

<sup>16</sup> As revised by the Congress at its 15th plenary session on 28 May 2008 (Resolution 256 (2008)) and complemented by the Standing Committee on 2 December 2008 (Resolution 273 (2008)).

## Flow chart for monitoring procedures



## **B. Code of Good Conduct for monitoring delegations**

A monitoring mission represents a huge workload and therefore requires major investment on the part of each person involved in the monitoring delegation.

The members of a monitoring delegation have different roles to play, but whatever their function and role, compliance with the same rules of conduct throughout the procedure is vital for the smooth running of the visit and for guaranteeing good relations with the national authorities encountered. Compliance with these rules will help to ensure the ultimate success of any monitoring mission and to prepare the work of co-operation with the authorities under any possible post-monitoring procedure.

Congress members taking part in monitoring missions have to have signed the Congress' Declaration of Principle. They shall avoid, in the framework of the accomplishment of such missions, conflicts between any actual or potential financial or any other interests, on a professional, personal or family level, in connection with the country concerned by such a monitoring procedure. If a member is unable to avoid such a conflict of interest it should be made known to the Congress Secretariat. Any gifts or similar benefits of a value in excess of 200 Euros that a member has accepted in the last 24 months from the authorities of the country concerned shall be also registered with the Secretariat. During such missions, Congress members shall avoid any situation that could appear to be a conflict of interest or receiving an inappropriate payment or gift.

### *i. The work of the rapporteurs*

Where two rapporteurs have been appointed to participate in a monitoring visit, they undertake to find out about the situation of local and regional democracy in a given country, to stay abreast of the current context before, during and after the visit, to attend all the meetings scheduled, including the briefings organised by the secretariat, and all working breakfasts, lunches and dinners. They also undertake to help prepare the report by examining the comments received.

Rapporteurs must obtain detailed information on the situation in the country by carefully reading the file prepared by the secretariat. Before the visit begins, they must know the main relevant features of the country and its political mode of functioning at the different government levels. In particular, they must know the general history of the country, its administrative organisation, the structures, number and nature of authorities existing, the different infra-national levels of government, the political system, etc. The secretariat will assist the rapporteurs with such preparatory work.

In this spirit, the rapporteurs may also use their knowledge of the country visited with the talking partners encountered during the visit, particularly by means of relevant questions directly relating to the Charter.

The rapporteurs' role is not one of inspection. Their task is to establish political dialogue with the authorities encountered on local democracy issues. They take part in a monitoring mission in their capacity as elected representatives, politicians going to meet the political authorities in the monitored country, to encourage the implementation of local and regional democracy in this country and to dialogue with the authorities encountered.

Consequently, if the rapporteurs wish to make any comparative comments, they should do so in an objective and constructive manner without trying to establish any classification of values among the Council of Europe member countries.

Listening, exchanging and showing courtesy are the key elements of positive discussion with the authorities.

During the meetings, the rapporteurs must foster exchanges of views, avoiding monologues as far as possible. They should try to prevent any tendency towards one-sided discourse.

The discussions should focus on the subject of the Congress's mandate, namely the implementation of the Charter and the operational system for local and regional self-government. This means that the delegation should not dwell on general political questions unrelated to the Charter, or more broadly on

topics irrelevant to consideration of the situation of local and regional democracy in the country. The monitoring delegation must strictly comply with the Congress's mandate and field of activity.

The times of the meetings scheduled on the programme, as regularly recalled by the secretariat, must be scrupulously respected. Meeting overruns can upset the rest of the day's programme, and late arrival at the ensuing appoints can cause difficulties for authorities expecting the delegation to attend a meeting scheduled for a specific time on the programme.

The rapporteurs are representing the Congress. More generally, they are representing the Council of Europe in the member states visited. As in all representative duties, it is important to show professionalism and to observe elementary rules of courtesy during the meetings. Monitoring delegation members must accordingly pay attention throughout the meetings scheduled and actively participate in the exchanges of views with the talking partners, asking questions directly connected with the Charter. As for all working meetings, mobile phones must be put on silent mode and no phone calls may be taken during the meetings.

These rules apply to the rapporteurs, the consultant, the secretariat and the interpreters.

*ii. The work of the consultant*

The consultant must sign a contract setting out the following obligations: preparation of items of information for the talking partners, familiarity with the file, participation in the visit, technical expert assistance before, during and after the visit, preparation of a preliminary draft report in line with the indications provided by the rapporteurs, and follow-up to the comments from the rapporteurs and then from the authorities on this preliminary draft report.

The consultant must adhere to the established plan for Congress monitoring reports as transmitted to him or her in advance by the secretariat.

During the visit, he or she shall clarify a number of legal or financial technical questions with the rapporteurs. In this connection, he should attend the briefing and all the meetings set out in the programme, including delegation meetings (briefings and debriefings) and meetings with talking partners. He may, at the rapporteurs' suggestion, put questions to specified talking partners mentioned in the programme.

He shall prepare a preliminary draft report within six weeks following the visit, in accordance with the undertakings set out in his contract (respecting the report plan, the number of pages and the guidelines set out by the rapporteurs at the debriefing).

*iii. The work of the secretariat*

The secretariat of the Monitoring Committee of the Congress is the permanent dialogue partner for delegation members. It must help the delegation with the administrative, logistical and substantive aspects of the mission. The Congress secretarial staff responsible for the visit must discuss and establish the dates of the visit with the delegation members, propose a draft programme prepared in co-operation with the secretary and head of the national delegation to the Congress, organise the visit, prepare the rapporteurs' file, and work in co-operation with the consultant on the outline questions for the talking partners and the preliminary draft report.

The secretariat provides logistical assistance to delegation members. In this connection, it requests estimates for and recruits interpreters for the mission (French or English/language of the country visited), as well as the transporter driving the delegation on the spot to the meetings scheduled on the programme. It may organise travel for delegation members on request (prepaid tickets), reserves the hotel where the delegation will be staying during the visit, and manages the rapporteurs' the consultant's applications for reimbursement after the mission.

The secretariat also provides continuous basic assistance to the rapporteurs before, during and after the visit. It carries out the requisite research for compiling an information file for delegation members, and draws up notes, analyses and country profiles, as well as notes for introducing the rapporteurs



during the visit. On request, the secretariat may also draft the speech presenting the draft report and draft recommendation for the committee and Congress session debates.

Its work consists in channelling political information between the rapporteurs and the talking partners, supplying the rapporteurs with relevant and substantive information so that they can assess the application of the Charter in the country visited under optimum conditions.

## CONGRESS POST-MONITORING AND POST-OBSERVATION OF ELECTIONS: DEVELOPING POLITICAL DIALOGUE

### RESOLUTION 353 (2013) REV<sup>17</sup>

#### 1. Referring to:

a. its Resolution 31 (1996) and to Statutory Resolution Res(2011)2 of the Committee of Ministers or the Council of Europe, which reiterates that the Congress shall prepare on a regular basis country-by-country reports on the situation of local and regional democracy in all member states and in states which have applied to join the Council of Europe, and shall ensure, in particular, that the principles of the Charter of Local Self-Government are implemented. The same Statutory Resolution states that the Congress shall also prepare reports and recommendations following the observation of local and/or regional elections;

b. Statutory Resolution CM/Res(2011)2 which makes clear that recommendations and opinions of the Congress shall be sent as appropriate to the Parliamentary Assembly and/or the Committee of Ministers as well as to European and international organisations and institutions. Resolutions and other adopted texts which do not entail possible action by the Assembly and/or the Committee of Ministers shall be transmitted to them for their information;

c. its Resolution 307 (2010) REV2 in which it stresses the importance for the Council of Europe to ensure that the commitments entered into by all its member states are fully honoured;

d. its Resolution 306 (2010) REV which underlines the importance of election observation at local and regional level and its complementarity to the political monitoring process of the European Charter of Local Self-Government which constitutes the cornerstone of local democracy in Europe. This resolution points to the specific role of local and regional elected representatives as observers of local and regional votes for the legitimacy and credibility of the electoral process at local and regional level;

e. the Priorities 2012-2013 proposed by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe and supported by the Committee of Ministers,<sup>18</sup> which stress the need to increase the coherence and effectiveness of monitoring, allowing a better integration of monitoring results into the programme of activities;

#### 2. The Congress:

a. contributes at local and regional level to the fundamental aims of the Council of Europe to foster democracy on our continent;

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<sup>17</sup> Debated and adopted by the Congress on 30 October 2013, 2<sup>nd</sup> sitting (see document [CG\(25\)13](#) explanatory memorandum), rapporteur: Lars O. Molin, Sweden (L, EPP/CCE).

<sup>18</sup> Documents CM(2011)48 rev and [CM/Del/Dec\(2011\)1112/1.6](#)

*b.* underlines that its recommendations addressed to the Committee of Ministers following monitoring and election observation missions cannot be effective if not implemented by the authorities of the member state to which the text refers;

*c.* considers that its political dialogue with national authorities, in the framework of the monitoring process, should be pursued after the adoption of a recommendation, in the form of a post-monitoring dialogue, in order to discuss - together with the authorities - a roadmap to improve local and regional democracy in line with the recommendations addressed to national authorities by the Committee of Ministers;

*d.* stands ready, at the request of its Bureau or of its Monitoring Committee, approved by its Bureau, to hold political exchanges of views on the European Charter on Local Self-Government with national authorities and all stakeholders involved in the monitoring process, with the aim to agree on a roadmap to implement Congress recommendations resulting from the monitoring procedure;

*e.* is prepared to enter , at the request of its Bureau or of its Monitoring Committee, approved by the Bureau, into a post-election observation dialogue with the national authorities and all stakeholders involved in the electoral process, with the aim to agree on a roadmap to implement its recommendations resulting from election observation missions;

*f.* concurs, on the basis of the defined roadmaps, with the relevant departments of the Council of Europe in the field of co-operation activities, aiming at providing input to, if appropriate, action plans or co-operation programmes;

*g.* confirms its will to continue contributing to the preparation and implementation of Council of Europe co-operation activities with the member States concerned to make the whole process meaningful and effective. It offers its operational capacities, mainly financed externally, for the implementation of projects to develop and improve local and regional democracy, and also for activities supported by member States and/or other donors, especially the European Union;

*h.* carries out, in the framework of the objectives set up in the reform programme of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe<sup>19</sup> a regular follow-up of the implementation of its recommendations in order to ensure the effectiveness and impact of its monitoring and election observation activities.

\* \* \*

### **Rules governing the implementation of political dialogue in the framework of Congress post-monitoring/post-observation of elections pursuant to Resolution 353 (2013) REV**

Pursuant to Resolution 353 (2013) REV, the purpose of the present rules is to define the arrangements for organising the post-monitoring and post-election observation political dialogue with all levels of government of the Council of Europe member states, with the aim of achieving the objective set forth in the aforementioned resolution, namely to pursue a political dialogue with national authorities of member states in order to implement the Congress recommendations addressed to the authorities.

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<sup>19</sup> Speech DD(2010)22rev delivered by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe at the 1075th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies – Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 20 January 2010

## **1. The post-monitoring dialogue**

1.1. The post-monitoring procedure may be carried out at the joint request of the Congress and the national authorities to which the Committee of Ministers addressed a Congress recommendation on local and regional democracy. It shall comprise five phases following the adoption of the recommendation by the Committee of Ministers:

- a) an exchange of views with the Permanent Representative to the Council of Europe of the country concerned;
- b) a political exchange with national authorities and other relevant stakeholders in order to identify the priorities laid down in the adopted recommendation;
- c) the development of a roadmap by the Congress delegation, in co-operation with national authorities, in order to determine the main steps necessary to implement the recommendations;
- d) a political dialogue with the national authorities in order to agree on a roadmap;
- e) the roadmap will be the basis for developing, if appropriate, an action plan or co-operation programme in association with the other relevant departments of the Council of Europe.

### **1.2. Composition of the delegation**

The delegation may comprise the monitoring rapporteurs, the Chair of the Monitoring Committee or, in the case of non-availability of the above-mentioned persons, any Congress member who has a particular knowledge of the given country. In the latter case, the criteria provided by Resolution 307 (2010) REV2 shall apply.

## **2. The post-election observation dialogue**

2.1. The post-election observation procedure may be put into place at the joint request of the Congress and the national authorities to which the Committee of Ministers addressed a Congress recommendation on observation of local or regional elections. It comprises the following steps:

- a) an exchange of views with the Permanent Representative to the Council of Europe of the country concerned;
- b) a political exchange with national authorities and other relevant stakeholders in order to identify the priorities laid down in the adopted recommendation;
- c) the development of a roadmap by the Congress delegation in co-operation with national authorities and other relevant stakeholders, in order to decide on major steps necessary to implement the recommendations;
- d) a political dialogue with the national authorities in order to agree on a roadmap;
- e) on the basis of this roadmap, if appropriate, an action plan or co-operation programme will be developed in association with other relevant departments of the Council of Europe.

### **2.2. Composition of the delegation**

The delegation may comprise the head of delegation/rapporteur – or in case of non-availability of the above-mentioned person(s) – any member of the Congress election observation mission as well as the rapporteur of the Monitoring Committee in charge of the respective country.

## **APPENDICE II – Agenda of the 25<sup>th</sup> Session**

**CG(25)OJ1PROV**  
28 October 2013


### **25<sup>th</sup> Session of the Congress**

Strasbourg, Palais de l'Europe,  
29-31 October 2013

**DRAFT AGENDA**  
**PUBLIC MEETING**

**THEME FOR 2013:**  
**EUROPE IN CRISIS – CHALLENGES**  
**TO LOCAL AND REGIONAL DEMOCRACY**

**Members' attention is drawn to:**

Electronic voting on texts will take place in the hemicycle and in Room 1. The voting handsets will be distributed at the entrance to the meeting rooms upon signature of the attendance register. 

**Participants are reminded that access to the hemicycle is strictly limited to holders of badges which indicate the specific hemicycle symbol. Seating in the hemicycle will be allocated according to the seating plans available for consultation by the entrance.**

Tabling written questions for oral reply (Office 1081): each member should limit herself/himself to one question. Please refer to the agenda for the deadlines.

The conditions and deadlines for tabling amendments (Office 1081): at the latest at **10.00** on the eve of the day when the texts to which they refer are to be discussed except for texts to be debated on Tuesday 29 October for which the deadline is **16.00 on Monday 28 October**. Amendments must be signed by 5 delegates from at least two delegations for texts debated in plenary sittings or in the chambers. Each amendment must specify the name of the delegate who will submit it.

Registration of speakers for the debates: the form for registration of speakers for the debates, available at the entrance of the hemicycle and Room 1, (plenary sittings and sessions of the chambers) must be submitted to the Table Office secretariat seated in front of the President's rostrum for sittings in the hemicycle or to the secretariat of the President for the chamber meeting in Room 1.

**Finance Office:** Office 1040.

Table Office **for any further questions: Office 1081.**

## **Monday 28 October 2013 (eve of the session)**

### **Bureaux meetings**

9.30-10.30, Room 7	Bureau of the Chamber of Regions
9.30-10.30, Room 6	Bureau of the Chamber of Local Authorities
10.30-12.30 and 14.00-16.00, Room 8	Bureau of the Congress

## **Seminar for Congress members 13.30 – 15.30**

Room 1	Open to all members of the Congress, secretaries of delegation and advisers
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### **Political group meetings**

#### **16.30 – 18.30**

Room 6	European Conservatives and Reformists Group (ECR)
Room 9	European People's Party Group in the Congress (EPP/CCE)
Room 10	Independent and Liberal Democrat Group (ILDG)
Room 11	Socialist Group (SOC)

## Tuesday 29 October 2013

### Committee meetings

8.30 – 10.45

Room	Current Affairs Committee
6	Governance Committee
Room	Monitoring Committee
8	
Room	
1	

## Tuesday 29 October 2013

11.00 – 12.30, Hemicycle

### Plenary Sitting

#### Opening of the 25th Session of the Congress by the President of the Congress

Herwig VAN STAA, Austria (R, EPP/CCE)

Verification of new members' credentials

#### Presentation by the rapporteurs:

**Anders KNAPE, Sweden (L, EPP/CCE), and Ludmila SFIRLOAGA, Romania (R, SOC)**

Debate and vote on the draft resolution [CG(25)2]

*Deadline for tabling amendments: 16.00 Monday 28 October*

Adoption of the draft agenda of the session

**[CG(25)OJ1PROV]**

Adoption of the draft minutes of the last sitting of the 24th Session (21 March 2013)

**[CG(24)PV3]**

Adoption of the composition of the Congress committees

**[CG(25)3]**

#### Communication by the President of the Congress

##### Debate

Armenian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (May 2013 – November 2013)

Statement by Armen GEVORGYAN, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Territorial Administration of Armenia, representing the Armenian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers

Oral reply to written questions [CG(25)15]

***Deadline for tabling written questions: 16.00 Monday 28 October***

Suspension of the sitting

#### EVENT:

***"The Magic of Armenian Grapes" wine-tasting offered by the Armenian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers in the lobby of the Hemicycle (at the close of the sitting)***

**Tuesday 29 October 2013**

**14.30 – 19.00 Hemicycle**

## **Plenary Sitting**

Statement by Thorbjørn JAGLAND  
Secretary General of the Council of Europe  
Oral reply to questions from the floor

Deposit of the instrument of ratification by San Marino of the European Charter of Local Self-Government

**Statements by:**

Thorbjørn JAGLAND, Secretary General of the Council of Europe  
**Gian Carlo VENTURINI, Minister of Internal Affairs, Public Function, Justice and Relations with the Township Councils, San Marino**  
**Herwig VAN STAA, President of the Congress, Austria (R, EPP/CCE)**

**Local and regional authorities responding to the economic crisis**

Presentation by the rapporteurs: Svetlana ORLOVA, Russian Federation, (R, EPP/CCE) and Barbara TOCE, Italy (L, SOC)

Presentation of the joint declaration by the Presidents of the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe on: "Facing the economic crisis: recovery requires reinforced co-operation between all levels of government" [CG(25)16]

Statements by:

**Sir Alan MEALE, General Rapporteur on Local and Regional Authorities, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe**

**Furio HONSELL, Mayor of Udine, Italy**

Debate and vote on the draft resolution and recommendation [\[CG\(25\)5PROV\]](#)

*Deadline for tabling amendments: 16.00 Monday 28 October*

**Less bureaucracy – good governance – more participation "Vote 16"**

**Statement by Jose HERRERA, Parliamentary Secretary for Culture and Local Government, Malta**

Oral reply to written questions [CG(25)17]

*Deadline for tabling written questions: 16.00 Monday 28 October*

**Local and regional democracy in Hungary**

**Presentation by the rapporteurs: Artur TORRES PEREIRA, Portugal (L, EPP/CCE), and Devrim CUKUR, Turkey (R, SOC)**

**Debate and vote on the draft recommendation [\[CG\(25\)7PROV\]](#)**

*Deadline for tabling amendments: 16.00 Monday 28 October*

Ceremony awarding the Congress medal to an honorary member

**Halvdan SKARD, Norway, former President of the Congress**

End of the sitting

**EVENT:**

*Reception offered by the Congress, the City of Andorra la Vella and the Permanent Representations of Andorra, Monaco and San Marino to celebrate ratification of the European Charter of Local Self-Government by the 47 member states (at the close of the sitting)*



Wednesday 30 October 2013

## Chamber of Local Authorities

9.00 - 12.15, Hemicycle

### Opening by the President of the Chamber

Jean-Claude FRECON, France (SOC)

### Adoption of the draft agenda of the Chamber

[CPL(25)OJ1PROV]

### Communication by the President of the Chamber

[CPL(25)1]

### Local democracy in Ireland

Presentation by the rapporteurs: Andris JAUNSLEINIS, Latvia (L, ILDG) and Merita JEGENI YILDIZ, Turkey (R, EPP/CCE)

Debate and vote on the draft recommendation [\[CPL\(25\)5PROV\]](#)

*Deadline for tabling amendments: 10.00 Tuesday 29 October*

Statement by Fergus O'DOWD TD, Minister of State, Ireland

Oral reply to written questions [CG(25)19]

*Deadline for tabling written questions: 15.00 Tuesday 29 October*

### Integration through self-employment : promoting migrant entrepreneurship in European municipalities

Presentation by the rapporteur: Henrik HAMMAR, Sweden (L, EPP/CCE)

Statement by Ayse ÖZBABACAN, Integration policy officer, Office of the Mayor, City of Stuttgart, Germany

Debate and vote on the draft resolution and recommendation [\[CPL\(25\)2PROV\]](#)

*Deadline for tabling amendments: 10.00 Tuesday 29 October*

### Election of the members of the Avagani (Assembly) of the City of Yerevan, Armenia (5 May 2013)

Presentation by the rapporteur and head of delegation : Stewart DICKSON, United Kingdom (R, ILDG)

Statement by Doreen HUDDART, on behalf of the members of the Committee of the Regions participating in the observation mission

Debate and vote on the draft resolution and recommendation [\[CPL\(25\)3PROV\]](#)

*Deadline for tabling amendments: 10.00 Tuesday 29 October*

### Local elections in "The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" (24 March 2013)

Presentation by the rapporteur and head of delegation: Jüri LANDBERG, Estonia (L, ILDG)

Statement by Joseph CORDINA, on behalf of the members of the Committee of the Regions participating in the observation mission

Debate and vote on the draft resolution and recommendation [\[CPL\(25\)4PROV\]](#)

*Deadline for tabling amendments: 10.00 Tuesday 29 October*

### Close by the President of the Chamber

#### EVENTS:

*Inauguration of an exhibition on "Cluj – The Heart of Transylvania", Romania, followed by a reception*

*and*

*Inauguration of an exhibition on Khanty-Mansiysk, Autonomous Okrug, Ugra, Russian Federation, followed by a reception*

Wednesday 30 October 2013

## Chamber of Regions

9.00 - 12.15, Room 1

### Opening by the President of the Chamber

Nataliya ROMANOVA, Ukraine (ILDG)

### Adoption of the draft agenda of the Chamber

[CPR(25)OJ1PROV]

### Communication by the President of the Chamber

[CPR(25)1]



### Regions and territories with special status in Europe

Presentation by the rapporteur: Bruno MARZIANO, Italy (R, SOC)

Debate and vote on the draft resolution and recommendation [\[CPR\(25\)2PROV\]](#)

*Deadline for tabling amendments: 10.00 Tuesday 29 October*



### Migrants' access to regional labour markets

Presentation by the rapporteur: Deidre McGOWAN, Ireland (R, GILD)

Debate and vote on the draft resolution and recommendation [\[CPR\(25\)3PROV\]](#)

*Deadline for tabling amendments: 10.00 Tuesday 29 October*

### Regionalisation and devolution in Europe in a context of economic crisis: recent developments

Statements by:

Franz SCHAUSBERGER, Delegate of the Region of Salzburg to the Committee of the Regions, Austria

Natalia KOMAROVA, Governor of the Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug, Ugra, Russian Federation

Volodymyr KONSTANTINOV, Chairman of Verkhovna Rada of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, Ukraine

Magali BALENT, Project Manager and Research Fellow on extremism and nationalism in Europe, Robert Schuman Foundation, France

Sonja STEEN, President of the Committee 3 - Culture, Education, Youth and International Cooperation of the Assembly of European Regions, Norway

Debate

### Close by the President of the Chamber

#### EVENTS:

*Inauguration of an exhibition on "Cluj – The Heart of Transylvania", Romania, followed by a reception and*

*Inauguration of an exhibition on Khanty-Mansiysk, Autonomous Okrug, Ugra, Russian Federation, followed by a reception*

**Wednesday 30 October 2013**

14.30 – 19.00, Hemicycle

## **Plenary Sitting**

### **Adoption of the draft minutes of the sittings of the Congress on 29 October**

[CG(25)PV1am] [CG(25)PV1pm]

**Statement by Jean-Claude MIGNON**, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Oral reply to questions from the floor

**Statement by Liviu Nicolae DRAGNEA**, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Regional Development and Public Administration, Romania

Oral reply to written questions [CG(25)18]

*Deadline for tabling written questions: 15.00 Tuesday 29 October*

### **Fighting political extremism at local and regional level**

Statements by:

Magali BALENT, Project Manager and Research Fellow on extremism and nationalism in Europe, Robert Schuman Foundation, France

Yiorgos KAMINIS, Mayor of Athens, Greece

Debate

### **Prospects for effective transfrontier co-operation in Europe**

Presentation by the rapporteur: Breda PEČAN, Slovenia (R, SOC)

Debate and vote on the draft resolution [\[CG\(25\)9PROV\]](#)

*Deadline for tabling amendments 10.00 Tuesday 29 October*

### **Update of key texts on monitoring and election observation activities**

Observation of local and regional elections – strategy and rules of the Congress Resolution 306 (2010)REV

Procedures for monitoring the obligations and commitments entered into by the Council of Europe member states in respect of their ratification of the European Charter of Local Self-Government (ETS No. 122) Resolution 307 (2010)REV2

Congress post-monitoring and post-observation of elections: developing political dialogue Resolution 353 (2013)REV

Texts to be presented by the rapporteur: Lars O MOLIN, Sweden (L, EPP/CCE)

Debate and vote on the revised resolutions [\[CG\(25\)13\]](#)

*Deadline for tabling amendments: 10.00 Tuesday 29 October*

4th Dosta! Prize ceremony

End of the sitting

### **EVENT:**

*Inauguration of an exhibition presenting the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, followed by a reception (at the close of the sitting)*

## Thursday 31 October 2013

### Bureau meeting

8.30 - 9.15, Room 8 Bureau of the Congress

## Thursday 31 October 2013

9.30 - 12.00, Hemicycle

### Plenary Sitting

#### Formal adoption of texts approved by the chambers

[CG(25)10]

#### Adoption of the draft minutes of the sittings of the Congress and of the chambers

on 30 October 2013 [CG(25)PV2, CPL(25)PV1 and CPR(25)PV1]

#### Local and regional democracy in Ukraine

Presentation by the rapporteurs: Marc COOLS, Belgium (L, ILDG), and Pascal MANGIN, France (R, EPP/CCE)

Debate and vote on the draft recommendation [\[CG\(25\)8PROV\]](#)

*Deadline for tabling amendments: 10.00 Wednesday 30 October*

#### Local and regional democracy in Albania

Presentation by the rapporteurs: Zdenek BROZ, Czech Republic (L, ECR), and Åke SVENSSON, Sweden (R, SOC)

Debate and vote on the draft recommendation [\[CG\(25\)11PROV\]](#)

*Deadline for tabling amendments: 10.00 Wednesday 30 October*

#### Local and regional democracy in Denmark

Presentation by the rapporteurs: Julia COSTA, Portugal (L, EPP/CCE), and Jean-Pierre LIOUVILLE, France (R, SOC)

Debate and vote on the draft recommendation [\[CG\(25\)12PROV\]](#)

*Deadline for tabling amendments: 10.00 Wednesday 30 October*

Close of the 25th Session by the President of the Congress







## **The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe**

### **The voice of Cities and Regions in Europe**

- The Congress is a political assembly composed of 636 elected officials - mayors, governors, councillors, etc. – representing the 200 000 local and regional authorities of the 47 Council of Europe member states.

*It speaks for Europe's local and regional elected representatives.*

- The Congress promotes devolution through transfer of political powers and financial resources to the municipalities and regions.

*It ensures that policy decisions are made at a level closest to the citizens.*

- The Congress guarantees civic participation and fosters a positive perception of local identities.

*It strives for living grassroots democracy in an ever more globalised world.*

- The Congress reinforces local and regional democracy by permanently monitoring the due application of the European Charter of Local Self-Government, observing local and regional elections, and issuing recommendations to the governments of the 47 Council of Europe member states.

*It upholds local self-government, together with democracy and human rights at local level.*



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