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Congress adopts a Recommendation after first-ever observation of local elections in the Netherlands

Strasbourg, 15.10.2014 – The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe adopted on 14 October a recommendation following on from its observation of the local elections in the Netherlands (19 March 2014). This was the first observation election mission carried out by the Congress in that country.

The report presented by Pearl Pedergnana (Switzerland, SOC) underlines the transparent, open and inclusive nature of the voting process in the Netherlands and the high level of democratic commitment of the staff involved in organising the municipal elections of 19 March 2014. "We were impressed by the overall organisation of the elections and the pragmatic approach to electoral management in the Netherlands which is well-embedded in the overall socio-cultural set-up and the long-standing democratic tradition of the country," stated Mrs Pedergnana.

The Congress nonetheless raises concerns about the lack of regulations on party and campaign financing, limitation of campaign expenditure and the conditions for sponsorship of political parties.

The recommendation calls on the Dutch authorities to pursue their efforts with a view to adopting such regulations, as soon as possible, and the policy aimed at improving counting procedures, along with the possibility of introducing legal provisions permitting a re-count of the votes.

The recommendation also encourages the authorities to continue their strategy of seeking to minimise the risk of fraud with regard to the long-established system of proxy voting in the Netherlands and to consider testing early voting by post as an alternative to this system.

[Report CPL\(27\)3](#)

The Congress has two chambers, the Chamber of Local Authorities and the Chamber of Regions. It brings together 318 full and 318 substitute members representing more than 200 000 European territorial communities.

President of the Congress: Jean-Claude Frécon (France, SOC), President of the Chamber of Local Authorities: Anders Knappe (Sweden, EPP/CCE), President of the Chamber of Regions: Gudrun Mosler-Törnström (Austria, SOC)

Political Groups: Socialist Group (SOC), Group of the European People's Party – Christian Democrats (EPP/CD), Independent and Liberal Democrat Group (ILDG), European Conservatives & Reformists Group (ECR)