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Ref. CG-PR 012 (2015)

Local and regional democracy in Greece

Strasbourg, 26 March 2015 – On 25 March the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, holding its Session in Strasbourg (France), examined a report on local and regional democracy in Greece. The Congress rapporteurs, Artur Torres Pereira (Portugal, EPP/CCE) and Gudrun Mosler-Törnström (Austria, SOC), drew attention to the progress made by Greece since the Congress's last recommendation in 2008, in particular through the adoption of the "New Architecture for Self-Governance and Decentralisation – the Kallikratis Programme".

"This reform represents an important step towards a more decentralised territorial system, particularly as regards the status of the prefectures and of the thirteen administrative regions that were formerly regional branches of central government" said Gudrun Mosler-Törnström.

The report moreover stresses the need to extend the scope of the Charter to the second tier of local government (regions) by amending the existing legislation.

"Since 2010 Greece has had to contend with a very difficult economic situation and has faced major difficulties in restoring fiscal and budgetary discipline. This has had a very significant impact on local authorities. The Congress call on the Government to review the legislation so as to confer statutory powers on local authorities and to ensure that the transfer of competences is accompanied by adequate concomitant financial resources, which local authorities may dispose of freely within the framework of their powers" explained Artur Torres Pereira.

Lastly, the Congress made a number of recommendations to the Greek authorities, in particular that they implement urgently in practice the existing provisions for insular and mountainous municipalities and grant special status to these areas, especially as regards their finances. It underlined the need to confer special status on the municipality of Athens as capital city and to introduce special provisions for the metropolitan municipalities of Athens and Thessaloniki.

Greece ratified the European Charter of Local Self-Government on 6 September 1989. Countries which have ratified the Charter are bound by its provisions. The Charter imposes compliance with a minimum number of rights, which are the European bedrock of local self-government. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe ensures respect for these principles.

More information:

- [Vidéo of the Debate](#)
- [Rapport CG/2015\(28\)8](#)
- [Speech - Gudrun MOSLER-TÖRNSTRÖM](#)
- [Speech - Artur TORRES PEREIRA](#)
- ["28th Session of the Congress" file](#)

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), - Christian Democrats (EPP/CD), Independent and Liberal Democrat Group (ILDG), European Conservatives & Reformists Group (ECR)