



T +33(0)390214895

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International Migrants Day – Statement by the President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities

“Migration reflects a legitimate desire for more human dignity, more security and a better future”

Strasbourg, 18.12.2015 – On the occasion of International Migrants Day on 18 December 2015, Jean-Claude Frécon, President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, made the following statement:

“The issue of migrants, and in particular their integration, is closely linked to the powers and responsibilities of local authorities, which are directly and concretely affected by migratory flows. Indeed, local and regional authorities are first in line when it comes to catering and providing accommodation for migrants and their families, a particularly difficult challenge given the current “migrant crisis” in Europe.

Local and regional elected representatives have a key role to play in facilitating the integration of migrants and in encouraging dialogue with the remainder of society. As many of the texts adopted over the past fifteen years have shown, the Congress is convinced that the integration of migrants depends, first and foremost, on their participation in local affairs and on their access to employment, education and all public services on an equal footing with the remainder of the population.

Migration reflects a legitimate desire for more human dignity, more security and a better future. I wish to reaffirm the importance that the Congress attaches to building inclusive societies where diversity and human rights are respected, for all, as pillars of participative democracy.”

[Refugees and migrants - Council of Europe decisions / documents and texts of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe](#)

The Congress has two chambers, the Chamber of Local Authorities and the Chamber of Regions. It brings together 324 full and 324 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 (EPP/CCE), Independent and Liberal Democrat Group (ILDG), European Conservatives & Reformists Group (ECR)