

PRESS RELEASE

**Council of Europe
Congress of Local and
Regional Authorities**



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2nd Euro-Arab Cities Forum: The Council of Europe Congress addresses the role of local autonomy for the future of the Arab region

Dates: 25 and 26 February 2011

Place: Malaga, Spain

Description: The 2nd Euro-Arab Cities Forum is being held jointly by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, the City of Malaga (Spain), the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), the Standing Committee for the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership of Local and Regional Authorities (COPPEM) and the Arab Towns Organisation (ATO).

In the context of the current upheavals in several Arab countries, the Forum represents a unique platform for strengthening democracy and local self-government. It will bring together mayors of European and Arab municipalities, representatives of international organisations and associations of local authorities. The aim is to debate issues of local governance, urban management for sustainable development, as well as culture, heritage and tourism.

The Forum will be opened by Francisco de la Torre Prados, Mayor of Malaga (Spain), Hussain Nasser Lootah, Mayor of Dubai (UAE), and by the members of the organising committee: Herwig Van Staa, President of the Chamber of Regions of the Congress, Ghassan Samman, Head of Foreign Affairs of the Arab Towns Organisation, Frédéric Vallier, Secretary General of the CEMR, and Raffaele Lombardo, President of the COPPEM.

Other participants will include Jorge Sampaio, UN High Representative for the Alliance of Civilisations, Catherine Ashton, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Hazem Qashuoe, Minister for Local Government of Jordan, and Janet Michael, Mayor of Ramallah.

The Forum will focus on five thematic sessions:

- prospects of Euro-Arab cities co-operation,
- local governance and new challenges,
- urban management for sustainable development and municipal services,
- culture, heritage and tourism,
- financial instruments.

Ignacio Sanchez Amor, Congress Vice-President (Spain), and Francis Lec, Congress member and first Vice-President of the General Council of the Somme Department (France), will participate in the session on "Local governance and new challenges". Gaye Doganoglu, Congress Vice-President (Turkey), and Anders Knape, Congress member and President of the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, will speak during the session on "Urban management for sustainable development and municipal services".

The forum will end with the presentation and adoption of a final declaration.

Official languages of the forum: English, Arabic, Spanish, French, Italian and Turkish.

Launched in Dubai (United Arab Emirates) in 2008, the Euro-Arab Cities Forum is organised every three years by an organising committee in which the Congress of Local and Regional

Authorities of the Council of Europe is involved.

Forum website : www.euroarabforum.es

Special file on the Congress website : www.coe.int/euro-arab-forum

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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: Keith Whitmore (United Kingdom, ILDG), President of the Chamber of Regions: Herwig van Staa (Austria, EPP/CD), President of the Chamber of Local Authorities: Jean-Paul Frécon (France, SOC)

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