

THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

Resolution 407 (2016)¹

Good governance in metropolitan areas

1. Metropolitan areas are becoming an increasingly important feature of Europe's urban landscape and an increasingly dominant force in terms of political, economic and cultural activities, as well as engines of development and economic success.

2. The governance of these areas is also undergoing rapid change, with an increasing role being played by non-governmental and non-elected stakeholders. Complex partnerships are emerging, involving stakeholders from various levels of public authority as well as the business sector. These changes are creating new challenges for traditional forms of representative democracy.

3. While some metropolitan areas are seeing the development of dynamic new forms of participation and political accountability, others are suffering an increasing democratic deficit, with a shift of power and decision making away from the politicians and a growing rollback of decentralised democracy.

4. Information and communication technologies (ICTs) and new media are providing new opportunities to the elected representatives of these areas and enabling new forms of transparency and accountability.

5. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe ("the Congress"), therefore, considering:

a. the Council of Europe Reference Framework for Regional Democracy (2009);

b. Congress Recommendation 188 (2006) on good governance in European metropolitan areas;

c. the European Urban Charter (1992);

d. the European Urban Charter II: manifesto for a new urbanity (2008);

e. Parliamentary Assembly Resolution 1964 (2013) on good governance of large metropolises;

6. Observing that the rapid development of metropolitan areas in Europe is resulting in an increasing divergence between models of governance, with variations within and between countries;

7. Concerned that the political development and governance of metropolitan areas is not always proceeding in optimal conditions, with appropriate political structures and dialogue with relevant stakeholders;

8. Affirming that the development of metropolitan areas should take the form of an organic evolution decided on and agreed by local partners and should not be imposed by central governments;

9. Convinced that the creation of metropolitan governance structures should not be used as a pretext for recentralising competences and powers;

10. Believing that all new governance structures should be democratically accountable and not involve any erosion of local democracy;

11. Reaffirming that a clear division of competences is a prerequisite for effective governance;

12. Commits itself to:

a. supporting and encouraging the establishment of appropriate multilevel political structures in order to enable metropolitan areas to be governed effectively with maximum political accountability, while respecting the principle of subsidiarity;

b. encouraging local stakeholders in metropolitan areas to work together, with a genuine commitment to co-operation based on the recognition of common interests;

c. continuing to work to improve the quality of governance of metropolitan areas;

13. Calls on local authorities in metropolitan areas to work together to ensure a clear division of labour, tasks and responsibilities between:

a. the metropolitan area and its components;

b. the mayor and councillors of the metropolitan area and the mayors and councillors of the component municipalities;

14. Calls on local authorities in metropolitan areas to work together with local authorities in metropolitan hinterlands to ensure their cohesive development in terms of the provision of public services;

15. Invites associations of local and regional authorities to:

a. support metropolitan areas in their development of innovative and appropriate forms of governance that respect the principle of subsidiarity;

b. foster the use of local and regional media to promote transparency, accountability and a sense of collective identity in metropolitan areas;

16. Invites metropolitan authorities to:

a. establish partnerships with chambers of commerce, professional organisations, private economic actors and civil society organisations, in order to ensure the harmonious development of the metropolitan areas;

b. develop metropolitan-wide planning, involving all relevant stakeholders and levels of government;

c. provide a clear division of tasks, responsibilities and power in decision making between and within different

institutions, with responsibilities being attributed according to the principle of subsidiarity;

d. guarantee democratic accountability and legitimacy through direct elections of the metropolitan bodies or by appointment of the elected representatives from the component local governments;

e. increase the transparency of the decision-making processes through online access to public information and

communication strategies using a variety of media formats to inform the public;

f. work together to develop new forms of accountability and citizen participation.

1. Debated and adopted by the Congress on 21 October 2016, 3rd sitting (see Document [CG31\(2016\)17final](#), rapporteur: Antonio Eroi, Italy (L, EPP/CCE)).