

Congress' participation at the 111th Session of the Venice Commission

Venice, 17 June 2017 – Stewart Dickson (United-Kingdom, ILDG), Member of the Chamber of Regions of the Congress, presented the Congress' monitoring activities regarding the European Charter of Local Self-Government and election observation during the 111th Session of the Venice Commission, on 16 March 2017. On this occasion, he informed the members of the Venice Commission of the recent monitoring visits to Italy, Andorra, Monaco, Liechtenstein and San Marino, countries in which the small surface area may have a decisive impact on the organisation of local democracy and application of the Charter. "In this regard, Congress plans to dedicate a debate during its plenary session in March 2018", he said. Mr Dickson also drew the Venice Commission's attention to the ongoing process of discussion with the Greek national authorities to launch a post-monitoring dialogue with Greece which is now considering the possibility to hold a constitutional reform affecting also local self-government.

In addition, Stewart Dickson presented the findings of local election observation missions led by the Congress since March 2017, in Finland and in the City of Yerevan (Armenia). "We raised some matters of concern in Armenia, such as allegations of pressure on voters, vote-buying and misuse of administrative resources, as already pointed out by Venice Commission", he stated. Mr Dickson also pointed out the post-electoral dialogue mission carried out by the Congress to Bosnia and Herzegovina, where no local elections have been held in the City of Mostar since 2008. "The extensive expertise of the Venice Commission on the Constitution and legislation of Bosnia and Herzegovina will certainly be very helpful for the Congress activities in the country" he concluded.