

## 32nd SESSION

Report  
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# Revision of the *Rules and Procedures of the Congress*

Bureau of the Congress

Rapporteurs:<sup>1</sup> Xavier CADORET, France (L, SOC), and  
Marc COOLS, Belgium (L, ILDG)

Resolution 418 (2017).....2

## Summary

In this document the co-rapporteurs present some proposals for modifications to the *Rules and Procedures of the Congress* adopted by the Congress on 21 October 2016 at its 31st Session.

Modifications are intended to increase the flexibility of the provisions relating to the Partner for Local Democracy Status (Rule 64) in particular those referring to the admissibility of requests.

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1: L: Chamber of Local Authorities / R: Chamber of Regions  
EPP/CCE: European People's Party Group in the Congress  
SOC: Socialist Group  
ILDG: Independent Liberal and Democratic Group  
ECR: European Conservatives and Reformists Group  
NR: Members not belonging to a political group of the Congress

**RESOLUTION 418 (2017)<sup>2</sup>**

1. In 2014, the Congress adopted the Partner for Local Democracy Status (incorporated into its Rules and Procedures in 2015) in order to formalise relations between the Congress and the political authorities in the Council of Europe's neighbouring countries, which included the local and regional authorities and their representative associations.
2. This status is intended to supplement other forms of participation in the work of the Congress already provided for in the Congress' Rules.
3. The rapporteurs, hoping to give new impetus to this co-operation, have examined Rule 64 and consider that certain provisions could be clarified or made more flexible, notably the criteria for admissibility of requests. The proposed changes are reflected in the text attached.
4. The Congress adopts the proposed changes to the *Rules and Procedures of the Congress*, as appended, which will be incorporated into the *Rules and Procedures of the Congress* and enter into effect immediately after the 32nd Session.

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<sup>2</sup> Debated and adopted by the Congress on 30 March 2017, 3rd sitting (see Document [CG32\(2017\)21](#)), co-rapporteurs: Xavier CADORET, France (L, SOC), and Marc COOLS, Belgium (L, ILDG).

[...]

**Rule 64 – Partner for Local Democracy status**

1. The Congress may grant Partner for Local Democracy status to delegations from non-member States of the Council of Europe in neighbouring regions<sup>3</sup> which meet the conditions set out in the present rule.
2. Only one such status may be attributed per state.
3. A formal request to be granted Partner for Local Democracy status must be addressed to the President of the Congress and must be drawn up jointly by the government of the requesting state and one or more associations of local and/or regional elected representatives in that state.
4. The formal request shall contain an explicit reference to the aspiration of the applicants to uphold, respect and promote at all levels of government the values and principles of the Council of Europe, and a commitment to:
  - a. initiate a process of devolution and/or regionalisation, based on the principles of the European Charter of Local Self-Government and/or the Council of Europe Reference Framework for Regional Democracy;
  - b. hold regular free and fair elections at local and/or regional level in accordance with the relevant international standards and, as far as possible, observed by a delegation of elected members of the Congress;
  - c. base the activity of their delegation on the principles of the European Code of Conduct for the political integrity of local and regional elected representatives;
  - d. inform the Congress Secretary General, on a regular basis, of the progress made in the field of decentralisation.
5. Each request must be accompanied by details of the procedure specific to each country, stipulating the arrangements for consulting associations of local and/or regional associations in the process of appointing members of the delegation.
6. The Bureau of the Congress will examine the request. It may consult with any of the committees that it considers pertinent and decide whether to attribute the status. During this examination, the Bureau may take several elements into consideration:
  - a. participation in the Council of Europe's neighbourhood policy;
  - b. implementation of joint action or of a co-operation programme with the Council of Europe;
  - c. ratification of the Council of Europe's open conventions or enlarged partial agreements (in particular the Venice Commission and the North-South Centre);
  - d. holding of the Partner for Democracy status with the Parliamentary Assembly.
7. If the Bureau decides to grant the status, it will submit its decision, in the form of a draft resolution, with an accompanying explanatory memorandum, to the Congress for vote.
8. With regard to the composition of each Partner for Local Democracy delegation:
  - a. this shall respect, as far as possible, the principles laid down in the Charter and the Congress's Rules and Procedures, in particular with regard to Article 2. Delegations should, therefore, reflect, as far as possible an equitable geographic and political representation and all attempts should be made to fulfil the gender provisions of Article 2, ensuring that at least one representative of the under-represented sex is included in the delegation;

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<sup>3</sup> The southern coast of the Mediterranean, the Middle-East and Central Asia.

- b. the number of members will be laid down by the Congress on a case by case basis, the practice in place in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe shall act as a guide;
  - c. it shall consist of representatives holding a local or regional electoral mandate in accordance with the provisions of Article 2 of the Charter. There shall be no substitutes in the delegation;
  - d. it shall elect a head of delegation and must ensure the support of a secretary or secretaries who are independent from all national government or agency authority for the purposes of this work and who preferably have ties with one of the associations of local and/or regional authorities entitled to be consulted with regard to the composition of national delegations. The appointment of the secretary or secretaries of delegation must be notified, in writing, to the Secretary General of the Congress by the head of delegation;
  - e. information on its composition and nomination shall be updated as required in accordance with the relevant procedures, and at the latest 15 days prior to each renewal session of national delegations to the Congress.
9. The forms and conditions of participation in the work of the Congress and of its chambers and committees of delegations with Partner for Local Democracy status are as follows:
- a. members may sit in all sessions of the Congress or its chambers and in meetings of the Statutory Forum, without the right to vote. They may speak subject to the president's consent. They may not table amendments but may table proposals as well as memoranda, though their names shall not be taken into account when counting the number of signatures required. They may, at their own expense, submit documents relating to the different items on the Congress agenda;
  - b. members may participate in all committee meetings without the right to vote. They may speak with the authorisation of the committee chair and may make proposals concerning the draft agenda;
  - c. travel and subsistence costs arising from the participation of the delegation will not be charged to the Congress's ordinary budget.
10. Members of these delegations may participate in meetings of political groups at the discretion of the groups themselves and according to the conditions established by the groups.
11. The decision to grant, suspend or withdraw Partner for Local Democracy status shall be taken by the Congress, on the basis of a draft resolution submitted by the Bureau of the Congress together with, if appropriate, the opinion of one or more committees to which the Bureau may wish to refer the matter.

[...]