

THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

Resolution 415 (2017)¹ Charter of European Political Parties for a Non-Racist Society (revised)

1. The Charter of European Political Parties for a Non-Racist Society is a document drawn up under the auspices of the European Union Consultative Commission on Racism and Xenophobia and was opened for signature on 28 February 1998 in Utrecht. Taking inspiration from the United Nations International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, opened for signature in 1965, it rejects all forms of racist violence, incitement to racial hatred and harassment and any form of racial discrimination.

2. Endorsed by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in September 2003 and then by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance in March 2004, this Charter, which was originally intended to apply only to the territory of the European Union has, since then, become one of the reference texts that different Council of Europe bodies have relied on when discussing Roma issues.

3. In October 2016, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe adopted Resolution 403 and Recommendation 388 on the situation of Roma and Travellers in the context of rising extremism, xenophobia and the refugee crisis in Europe, whereby the Congress encouraged local and regional authorities to fight anti-Gypsyism, be it social or institutional, by publicly denouncing hate speech, violence and discrimination against Roma and Travellers.

4. In January 2017, the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe for Roma Issues, Valeriu Nicolae, presented a revised version of the Charter to the Congress for adoption, together with a declaration of commitment to its implementation to be signed individually

by mayors. This request was triggered by his concerns regarding the need to bring the Charter up to date, on the one hand because some eastern European countries had not been targeted for signature as they had become member States after 2003 and, on the other hand, because political developments related to increased migration and concepts such as anti-Gypsyism, as well as other manifestations of racism, were not reflected therein.

5. The Congress and the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Roma Issues have previously been involved in joint projects, particularly in the context of the European Alliance of Cities and Regions for the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers,² which was set up in 2014 to promote positive action for Roma and Travellers at the local level. The Congress Spokesperson on Roma Issues is persuaded that an updated version of the Charter can assist local authorities in their fight against anti-Gypsyism, and that the signature of a declaration of commitment would give a much needed new impetus to their action.

6. In the light of the above, the Congress invites the local and regional authorities of Council of Europe member States to:

a. endorse the Charter of European Political Parties for a Non-Racist Society in its revised version;

b. circulate the Charter as widely as possible and promote it as a set of principles that can guide the action of local authorities in setting up their awareness raising campaigns and activities;

c. task the Current Affairs Committee with taking appropriate action to support promotion of the Charter.

1. Debated and adopted by the Congress on 29 March 2017, 2nd sitting (see Document [CG32\(2017\)17](#), explanatory memorandum), Congress Spokesperson on Roma issues: John WARMISHAM, United Kingdom (L, SOC).

2. The term “Roma and Travellers” is used at the Council of Europe to encompass the wide diversity of the groups covered by the work of the Council of Europe in this field: on the one hand a) Roma, Sinti/Manush, Calé, Kaale, Romanichals, Boyash/Rudari; b) Balkan Egyptians (Egyptians and Ashkali); c) Eastern groups (Dom, Lom and Abdal); and, on the other hand, groups such as Travellers, Yenish, and the populations designated under the administrative term “Gens du voyage”, as well as persons who identify themselves as Gypsies.