

THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

Recommendation 188 (2006)¹ on Good Governance in European Metropolitan Areas

The Congress,

1. Having regard to:

a. the explanatory memorandum on Good Governance in European Metropolitan Areas presented by Karsten Behr (Germany, R, EPP/CD) and Piotr Pimashkov (Russian Federation, L, SOC) and

b. the European Urban Charter,

2. Observes that all over Europe, metropolitan areas are increasingly becoming the centres of economic, political and cultural life and for that reason are gaining growing importance as locomotives for the economically successful development of Europe;

3. Notes that at the same time metropolitan areas are facing serious structural transformations;

4. Considers that a key factor for the success of a metropolitan area which could help to address internal tasks, overcome difficulties and accompany structural changes is a policy of Good Metropolitan Governance;

5. Believes that the establishment of Good Metropolitan Governance contributes to sustainable, more efficient and democratic development in metropolitan areas;

6. Welcomes and encourages efforts of metropolitan areas to develop Good Governance policies;

7. Invites member states of the Council of Europe to develop tools and encourage initiatives and policies aimed at developing Good Metropolitan Governance;

8. Invites member states of the Council of Europe to take into account the following recommendations on Good Metropolitan Governance in shaping new, or reforming existing, metropolitan areas:

a. a metropolitan area should pursue the following objectives within the framework of Good Metropolitan Governance:

i. provide a good level of services across its territory to the population and ensure good quality of living conditions and safeguard environmental quality;

ii. stimulate development of economic and cultural life as well as infrastructures within the area;

iii. create forms of integration, effective co-operation and coherence to co-ordinate the separate and fragmented local authorities,

iv. create horizontal and vertical co-operation or co-ordination between various levels of public authorities as well as between these authorities and the non-governmental sector.

b. to achieve these objectives the metropolitan areas should be able to rely on the following elements in their policy:

i. a coherent legislative, normative and institutional framework. In particular, member states can support metropolitan governance processes by offering a legislative framework for self-organisation processes, for example in financial equalisation, spatial planning law or in legislation that fosters inter-communal co-operation;

ii. a clear-cut set of competences: metropolitan areas often carry out responsibilities which requires specific legislation;

iii. appropriate funding and organisational capacities. Metropolitan areas have specific needs in order to carry out their responsibilities which require a sound organisational basis and corresponding financing;

iv. a clear radius of action and instruments for implementation of their action (central areas/suburbs);

9. The following elements should be used as criteria for the evaluation of governance structures and processes:

a. degree of transparency of the decision-making process: institutions and main stakeholders of the governance process should work in an open way and explain how decisions are made. Openness is designed to strengthen the trust of different partners and the co-ordination process as a whole;

b. degree of public involvement: Good Governance can be characterised by co-ordination of short-term actions of individual stakeholders with long-term planning by means of common visions and objectives. Thus, it is important that stakeholders should become involved in the policy making process from the conception phase to the implementation, which creates confidence in the results of policy making. Different co-ordination schemes and processes involving public, economic and civic stakeholders should be encouraged;

c. degree of accountability of public institutions: the division of tasks and responsibilities of conception, decision making and implementation between and within different institutions in metropolitan areas has to be clear. The implementation of tasks and the accountability towards stakeholders should be assigned according to the principle of subsidiarity as close as possible to the citizen;

d. degree of effectiveness and efficiency of the decision-making process: decisions in urban politics and metropolitan governance have to be timely and should be well-founded on clear long-term objectives;

e. degree of coherence in the policy-making process: policies and actions have to be coherent and easy to comprehend. The growing number of tasks which have to be solved in metropolitan areas call for coherence between the different strategies. To ensure coherence between sectoral and territorial policies a range of essential stakeholders and institutions has to be involved in co-ordination processes. The principle of democracy demands transparency and

accountability; this obligation also applies to procedures designed to ensure coherence;

f. degree of sustainability: the central objective of governance activities should be sustainable metropolitan development. Sustainability refers to the challenge of urban and regional policies to balance social, economic and environmental issues and needs for present and future generations.

1. Debated and adopted by the Congress on 31 May 2006, 2nd Sitting (see Document CG (13) 6, draft recommendation presented by K. Behr (Germany, R, EPP/CD) and P. Pimashkov (Russian Federation, L, SOC) rapporteurs).