

The Bureau of the Congress

CG-BUR(2021)40-DECfin
5 October 2021 – 12.00

Meeting of the Bureau of the Congress Visegrád, Hungary 4-5 October 2021

Abridged report – List of items discussed and decisions taken

1. The President of the Congress, Mr Leendert VERBEEK opened the meeting. The list of participants appears in Appendix 1.
2. The Bureau adopted the agenda as set out in Appendix 2.
3. The Bureau took note of the communication by the President of the Congress.
4. The Bureau took note of the communication by the Secretary General of the Congress.
5. The Bureau took note of the reports on the meetings of the bureaux of the chambers held on the morning of 4 October 2021.
6. The Bureau took note of the information on the election procedure for the Secretary General of the Congress.
7. The Bureau took note of the implementation of the budget of the Congress for 2021 and the perspectives for the budget of 2022-2023 and the initiatives by the heads of delegations of the Congress in this respect and expressed concern that the recommendations of the Congress had not been taken into account.
8. The Bureau approved the composition of national delegations as set out in Document CG-BUR(2021)40-32 and presented by the rapporteurs Xavier CADORET, France (L, SOC/G/PD) and Aleksandra MALETIĆ, Serbia (R, EPP/CCE).
9. The Bureau took note of the list of Bureau rapporteurs and representatives in outside bodies and those who had lost their mandate, as set out in Document CG-BUR(2021)40-39, and took note that a co-rapporteur on the budget and a co-rapporteur on the Congress Charter and the Congress Rules and Procedures would be appointed in the second Bureau meeting of the session. The Bureau agreed to appoint Stewart DICKSON as Congress Representative to the Council of Democratic Elections and as spokesperson on the Observation of Local and Regional Elections.
10. The Bureau took note of the new topics suggested for Congress thematic spokespersons and approved the terms of reference as set out in Document CG-BUR(2021)40-33.
11. The Bureau took note of information on the ongoing review of the Congress Rules and Procedures.
12. The Bureau approved the timetable of meetings and the draft agenda of the 41st Session of the Congress as set out in Documents CG(2021)41-01 and CG(2021)41-OJprov and took note that an election for two vice-presidents would take place in the Chamber of Local Authorities. The Bureau also took note of the list of youth delegates as set out in Document CG(2021)40-INF55.
13. The Bureau took note of the information on the work of the Congress committees in implementing the Congress' priorities.

14. The Bureau took note of the calendar of local and regional elections in 2021 as set out in Document CG-BUR(2021)40-INF51, and of the information on the observation of the local and regional elections in Morocco, 8 September 2021 and the local elections in Georgia, 2 October 2021.

The Bureau took note that the invitation to observe the regional elections in the Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia, Republic of Moldova on 19 September 2021 had to be declined due to concurrent events.

The Bureau took note that an invitation to observe the local and regional elections in Denmark on 16 November 2021 had been received.

The Bureau agreed to the deployment of an electoral assessment mission of limited scope from 1 to 6 December 2021 to observe the elections of the local self-government bodies in Armenia, following receipt of an invitation. Furthermore, the Bureau agreed to invite the Armenian authorities to participate in a post-monitoring dialogue to discuss implementation of the Congress recommendation of 2020.

15. The Bureau took note of the situation of local and regional democracy in Albania.

With respect to Turkey, the Bureau expressed concern at the situation of opposition politicians in long term detention (cf Document CG-BUR(2021)40-37), notably that of Nurhayat ALTUN and Leyla GÜVEN, former members of the Turkish delegation to the Congress.

With regard to Belarus, the Bureau expressed concern at the dissolution of the Lev Sapieha Foundation, an organisation of independent experts on local self-government, with Guest Observer status with the Congress since 2001.

The Bureau took note with concern of the situation in Tunisia and expressed the wish to pursue cooperation with a view to strengthening local democracy in the country.

16. The Bureau took note of developments concerning the Parliamentary Assembly.

17. The Bureau took note of the reply to Congress Recommendation 453(2021) "Ensuring the respect of the European Charter of Local Self-Government in major crisis situations".

18. The Bureau took note of updated information concerning the Congress contribution to the World Forum for Democracy 2020/2021 – "Can Democracy Save the Environment?" and of the proposed Congress delegation.

19. With respect to the European Committee of the Regions, the Bureau took note that the Congress had been invited to nominate candidates and participate in the jury and the evaluation committee of the Mayor Paweł Adamowicz Award. On 26 May 2021, the Congress Bureau agreed to respond positively to the invitation. In light of the deadline for submitting nominations (30 September 2021), the presidents of the Congress and the chambers nominated Jakob WIENEN (Netherlands, EPP/CCE). The Bureau agreed to designate the Chair of the Governance Committee and the Secretary of the Governance Committee respectively in the jury and in the evaluation committee.

20. The Bureau took note of the invitation to the Congress from the European Youth Forum, the platform of youth organisations in Europe, to participate in the jury of the European Youth Capital Award 2024 and of the appointment of Thomas ANDERSSON, Chair of the Current Affairs Committee.

21. The Bureau took note of the list of Congress meetings in 2021 as set out in Document CG-BUR(2021)40-INF53 and of the proposed calendar of meetings for 2022 as set out in Document CG-BUR(2021)40-INF57.

22. The Bureau adopted the present Abridged report of the meeting – List of items discussed and decisions taken as set out in Document CG-BUR(2021)40-DECprov.

23. On 5 October 2021 the Bureau held a thematic discussion on the Congress activities, structures, resources and working methods.

Appendix 1 – List of participants

Members of the Bureau

Leendert VERBEEK, Netherlands, (R, SOC/G/PD), President of the Congress
Bernd VÖHRINGER, Germany, (L, EPP/CCE), President of the Chamber of Local Authorities
Harald SONDEREGGER, Austria, (R, EPP/CCE), President of the Chamber of Regions
Xavier CADORET, France, (L, SOC/G/PD)
Aleksandra MALETIĆ, Serbia, (R, EPP/CCE)
Andrei NOVIKOV, Estonia, (R, ILDG)
Tunc SOYER, Turkey, (R, SOC/G/PD)
Emin YERITSYAN, Armenia, (L, EPP/CCE)
Sevdia UGREKHELIDZE, Georgia, (L, EPP/CCE)

Chairs of committees

Gudrun MÖSLER-TÖRNSTRÖM, Austria, (L, SOC/G/PD), Monitoring Committee

Presidents of Congress political groups

Vladimir PREBILIC, Slovenia, (L, SOC/G/PD), 1st Vice-president
Marc COOLS, Belgium, (L, ILDG)
Svitlana BOHATYRCHUK KRYVKO, Ukraine, (R, ECR)

Secretariat

Andreas KIEFER, Secretary General of the Congress
Rafael BENITEZ, Director of the Congress
Dolores RÍOS TURÓN, Head of the Table Office and Secretary of the Bureau
Renate ZIKMUND, Executive Secretary of the Chamber of Local Authorities
Dmitri MARCHENKOV, Executive Secretary of the Chamber of Regions
Stephanie POIREL, Head of the Division of Statutory Activities
Katyana VASILEVA, Assistant to the Bureau

Appendix 2 – Agenda**Monday 4 October****10.45-11.15****Welcome speeches****11.15**

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|------------|---|---|--|
| 1. | Opening of the meeting | | |
| 2. | Adoption of the draft agenda | CG-BUR(2021)40-OJprov | <i>Dec.</i> |
| 3. | Communication by the President of the Congress | CG-BUR(2021)40-INF49 | <i>Info.</i> |
| 4. | Communication by the Secretary General of the Congress | CG-BUR(2021)40-INF50 | <i>Info.</i> |
| 5. | Bureaux of the chambers, 4 October 2021 | CPL-BUR(2021)30-OJ
CPR-BUR(2021)30-OJ | <i>Info.</i>
<i>Info.</i> |
| 6. | Election of the Secretary General of the Congress | CG-BUR(2021)40-INF46 | <i>Info.</i> |
| 7. | Budget of the Congress
Budget for 2021
Budget for 2022-2023 | CG-BUR(2021)40-INF43
CG-BUR(2021)40-INF48
CG(2021)40-06 | <i>Info.</i>
<i>Info.</i>
<i>Info.</i> |
| 8. | National delegations
Rapporteurs :
Xavier CADORET, France (L, SOC/G/PD)
Aleksandra MALETIĆ, Serbia (R, EPP/CCE) | CG-BUR(2021)40-32 | <i>Dec.</i> |
| 9. | Bureau rapporteurs and representatives in outside bodies | CG-BUR(2021)40-39 | <i>Dec.</i> |
| 10. | Congress thematic spokespersons | CG-BUR(2021)40-33 | <i>Dec.</i> |
| 11. | Review of the Congress Rules and Procedures | | <i>Info.</i> |
| 12. | 41st Session of the Congress | | |
| 12.1 | Timetable of meetings | CG(2021)41-01 | <i>Dec.</i> |
| 12.2 | Adoption of the draft agenda | CG(2021)41-OJ | <i>Dec.</i> |
| 12.3 | List of youth delegates | CG-BUR(2021)40-INF55 | <i>Info.</i> |
| 13 | Work of the committees | | <i>Info.</i> |
| 13.1 | Abridged Report of the Monitoring Committee, 17 September 2021 | CG/MON(2021)21-RAprov | <i>Info.</i> |
| 14. | Local and regional elections in 2021 | CG-BUR(2021)40-INF51 | <i>Info.</i> |
| 14.1 | Local and regional elections in Morocco, 8 September 2021 | | <i>Info.</i> |
| 14.2 | Regional elections in the Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia, Republic of Moldova, 19 September 2021 | | <i>Info.</i> |
| 14.3 | Local elections in Georgia, 2 October 2021 | | <i>Info.</i> |
| 14.4 | Regional elections in Denmark, 16 November 2021 | CG-BUR(2021)40-INF56 | <i>Info.</i> |
| 14.5 | Elections of the local self-government bodies in Armenia, from October to December 2021 | CG-BUR(2021)40-34 | <i>Dec.</i> |
| 15. | Local and regional democracy | | |
| 15.1 | Albania | | <i>Info.</i> |

15.2	Turkey Situation of Nurhayat Altun and Leyla Güven	CG-BUR(2021)40-37	<i>Dec. Info.</i>
15.3	Belarus		<i>Info.</i>
15.4	Tunisia	CG-BUR(2021)40-38	<i>Dec.</i>
16.	Parliamentary Assembly		
	Address by Mr Péter Szijjártó, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary, Chair of the Committee of Ministers, to the Parliamentary Assembly (Strasbourg, 21 June 2021 and 28 September 2021)	[link]	<i>Info.</i>
	Report by the Chair of the Committee of Ministers to the Parliamentary Assembly (June-September 2021)	[link]	<i>Info.</i>
17.	Intergovernmental sector		
17.1	Committee of Ministers Reply to Congress Recommendation 453(2021) "Ensuring the respect of the European Charter of Local Self-Government in major crisis situations"	CM/Cong(2021)Rec453-final	<i>Info.</i>
18.	World Forum for Democracy 2020/2021 – "Can Democracy Save the Environment?"	[link]	<i>Info.</i>
19.	European Committee of the Regions		
	Participation in the jury and evaluation committee of the Mayor Adamowicz Award	CG-BUR(2021)40-35	<i>Dec.</i>
20.	European Youth Forum Participation in the jury of the European Youth Capital 2024 Award.		<i>Dec.</i>
21.	Congress meetings		<i>Info.</i>
21.1	Congress meetings in 2021	CG-BUR(2021)40-INF53	<i>Info.</i>
21.2	Approved calendar of meetings for 2022	CG-BUR(2021)40-INF57	<i>Info.</i>
22.	Other business		
23.	Adoption of the abridged report of the meeting	CG-BUR(2021)40-DECprov	<i>Dec.</i>

Tuesday 5 October

9.00-12-15 :

The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities: the way forward

[\[Activity Report July 2020-Feb 2021\]](#)

[\[2021-2026 Congress Priorities\]](#)

[\[Congress Thematic Activities\]](#)

9:00 – 9:30: General introduction
9:30 – 10.30: Congress structure, procedures and resources
10:30: Coffee break
11:00 – 12:00: Congress work and activities
12:00 – 12:15: Conclusions

Background :

This morning will provide the opportunity for a brainstorming and exchange of views on the future of the functioning of the Congress and the impact of its work. Taking into account the Congress' position in the Council of Europe's institutional architecture, its unique role in bringing the local and regional dimension of democracy to the work of the Organisation, and its recently adopted priorities, the debate will focus on the Congress' strengths and assets, challenges and weaknesses with a view to

- developing a shared vision of the Congress' future based on the Congress' priorities,
- reflecting on its structures, working methods, and
- identifying needs for reforming and streamlining rules and procedures.

There will be a 20 min. general introduction by the President and the Secretary General on the context and the objectives pursued by the exercise. The Director will then provide the background on the Congress institutional position, procedures and resources.

After the general introduction, participants will consider two thematic blocks (1 hour each); one on the Congress structure, procedures and resources and the other on its work and activities. There will be a coffee break between the two.

Introductory interventions will set the context for each of these two blocks: the presidents of the Congress and its chambers will introduce the first block, the chairs of the committees, the second block.

The introductory interventions will be followed by an exchange with Bureau members and participants all of which are called upon to play an active role.

More specifically, the first block will focus on the Congress structure, procedure and resources and address the following issues: institutional setting (chambers, bureaux, committees), procedural setting, and resources (members, delegations and staff).

The second block will be devoted specifically to the substantial political work of the Congress as regards topicality, relevance, sustainability, and impact. Are we fulfilling our mission with regard to the Congress' mandate and stake holders? It is not intended to question the agreed priorities, but rather to focus on the modus operandi on topics and follow-up.

Based on the outcomes of this brainstorming, follow-up will be devised.