

CG-BUR(2022)47-DEC  
23 September 2022

**Meeting of the Bureau of the Congress  
Lelystad, Flevoland, Netherlands  
Friday 23 September 2022**

**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 is set out in Appendix 1.
2. The Bureau adopted the agenda as set out in Appendix 2 and took note of the abridged report of the previous meeting of the Bureau as set out in Document CG-BUR(2022)46-DEC.
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, notably the state of implementation of the budget.

The Bureau took note that the Congress Secretariat will participate in a “Contact Group” within the Council of Europe Secretariat to be set up in co-operation with representatives of Belarusian democratic forces and civil society which will report back on its activities on a regular basis.

5. The Bureau pursued its discussion on the Russian Federation’s war against Ukraine and endorsed the President’s statements on the possible organisation of so-called referendums in Ukrainian territories currently occupied by Russia (such as that proposed for the Kherson Region at the end of September) and on the continuing abductions of Ukrainian local elected representatives. The Bureau issued a statement as set out in Appendix 3. The Bureau took note of the state of cooperation with the European Committee of the Regions and the major European Associations of local and regional authorities in supporting Ukrainian local and regional authorities and called upon Congress members to make full use of the Cities4Cities platform.

6. The Bureau approved the changes in the composition of the national delegations, as set out in Document CG-BUR(2022)47-73rev.

7. The Bureau took note of the schedule of meetings of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Session as set out in Document CG(2022)43-01. It approved the draft agenda of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Congress, as set out in Document CG(2022)43-OJ and approved consideration, under the tacit adoption procedure, of the draft resolution on the Congress position on the Revised Code of Good Practice on Referendums (adopted by the Council for Democratic Elections and the Venice Commission). The Bureau took note of the chairing of the plenary sittings, as set out in Document CG-BUR(2022)47-74rev and approved the side events, as set out in Document CG-BUR(2022)47-75rev.

8. With regard to Congress committees, the Bureau approved the terms of reference, as set out in Document CG-BUR(2022)47-76 and took note of the information on the activities of the committees. Furthermore, it thanked Ulrike LIEDTKE, President of the Brandenburg State Parliament, for her kind invitation to hold a meeting of the Monitoring Committee in Potsdam, Germany, in June 2023 and the authorities of the Province of Gelderland, Netherlands, for the kind invitation to hold a meeting of the Governance Committee in Arnhem in June 2023 and gave its approval to the two meetings subject to the Congress’ rules on budgetary neutrality.

The Bureau welcomed the ratification by Portugal of the Additional Protocol to the European Charter of Local Self-Government on participation in local public affairs, which will enter into force in that country on 1 January 2023.

9. The Bureau took note of the calendar of local and regional elections as set out in Document CG-BUR(2022)47-77 and approved the participation of the Congress in the observation of the cantonal and

local elections respectively in Bosnia and Herzegovina on 2 October 2022 and Slovenia on 20 November 2022 and approved the delegation for Bosnia-Herzegovina as set out in Document CG-BUR(2022)47-81 and entrusted the three presidents with approving the delegation for Slovenia.

10. The Bureau took note of the situation of local and regional democracy in Türkiye and of the situation of Nurhayat ALTUN and Leyla GÜVEN, former members of the Turkish delegation to the Congress.

The Bureau tasked the secretariat with investigating the feasibility of a joint fact-finding mission with the Venice Commission to Türkiye in order to assess the impact of Opinion 979/2019 of the Venice Commission on the replacement of elected candidates and mayors.

11. The Bureau took note of the information on the Parliamentary Assembly (PACE), notably the new General Rapporteur on local and regional authorities on behalf of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, Armen GEVORGYAN.

12. The Bureau endorsed the Congress' contribution to the High-level Reflection Group on the future of the Council of Europe and took note of the state of play concerning a 4th Summit of Heads of State and Government as set out in Document CG-BUR(2022)47-70. It encouraged close cooperation with the Parliamentary Assembly in the process of preparing the Summit decisions so that the specific aspects that elected parliamentarians and local and regional leaders can contribute to achieving the objectives of the Council of Europe could be taken into account. The Bureau agreed to continue, at its 43<sup>rd</sup> Session, the debate about the added value of the Congress and its members in implementing and achieving democracy, human rights and the rule of law across all 46 member states at local and regional level.

The Bureau agreed to invite the new chair of the Committee of Ministers' Rapporteur Group on Democracy (GR-DEM), Ambassador Svetlana GELEVA, Permanent Representative of North Macedonia, to participate in a forthcoming Bureau meeting in December 2022 or February 2023 and to hold a joint thematic event with the GR-DEM in early 2023.

13. The Bureau took note of the concept note and programme of the World Forum for Democracy (7-9 November 2022) and of the call for members to express their interest in participating in the Congress delegation to the World Forum, as set out in Document CG-BUR(2022)47-80.

14. The Bureau took note that the next meeting of the Congress/European Committee of the Regions High-Level Group would be held on 29 November 2022 and of the composition of the members of the Bureau of the European Committee of the Regions of the European Union as of 29 June 2022.

15. The Bureau took note of the list of Congress meetings in 2022 as set out in Document CG-BUR(2022)47-78 and approved the list of dates of Bureau meetings and sessions in 2023 as set out in Document CG-BUR(2022)47-79.

16. The Bureau adopted the present abridged report of the meeting as set out in Document CG-BUR(2022)47-DECprov.

## 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)  
 Gunn Marit HELGESEN, Norway (R, EPP/CCE)  
 Emin YERITSYAN, Armenia (L, EPP/CCE)  
 Sevdia UGREKHELIDZE, Georgia, (L, EPP/CCE)  
 Lia MONTALTI, Italy (R, SOC/G/PD)  
 Cecilia DALMAN EEK, Sweden, (R, SOC/G/PD)  
 Oksana DERKACH, Ukraine, (L, EPP/CCE)

### Chairs of committees

Thomas ANDERSSON, Sweden, (R, ILDG), Current Affairs Committee  
 Gudrun MOSLER-TÖRNSTRÖM, Austria, (L, SOC/G/PD), Monitoring Committee

### Outgoing President

Anders KNAPE, Sweden, (L, EPP/CCE)

### Presidents of Congress political groups

Anders KNAPE, Sweden, (L, EPP/CCE)  
 Marc COOLS, Belgium, (L, ILDG)  
 Karl-Heinz LAMBERTZ, Belgium, (R, SOC/G/PD)  
 Svitlana BOHATYRCHUK KRYVKO, Ukraine, (R, ECR)

### Partners

Carol THOMAS, Belgium, Council of European Municipalities & Regions  
 Christian SPAHR, France, Assembly of European Regions

### 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 Committees  
 Katyana VASILEVA, Assistant to the Bureau

**Appendix 2 – Agenda**

<b>1.</b>	<b>Opening of the meeting</b>		
<b>2.</b>	<b>Adoption of the agenda</b>	<a href="#">CG-BUR(2022)47-OJprov</a> <a href="#">CG-BUR(2022)46-DEC</a>	<i>Dec.</i> <i>Info.</i>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Communication by the President of the Congress</b>	<a href="#">CG-BUR(2022)47-71</a>	<i>Info.</i>
	Missions and meetings of the President of the Congress		
<b>4.</b>	<b>Communication by the Secretary General of the Congress</b>	<a href="#">CG-BUR(2022)47-72</a> <a href="#">Press release</a>	<i>Info.</i>
	Missions and meetings of the Secretary General of the Congress		
<b>5.</b>	<b>Election of the Secretary General of the Congress</b>	<a href="#">Link</a> <a href="#">Link</a>	<i>Info.</i>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Russian Federation’s war against Ukraine</b>	<a href="#">Crimea Platform Summit of Heads of State and Government - Speeches 2022</a>  <a href="#">Political Declaration of the Ministerial Ukraine Accountability Conference</a>  <a href="#">AS/jur(2022)27</a>  <a href="#">CG-BUR(2022)47-82</a>	<i>Info.</i>
6.1	Council of Europe		
6.2	European Committee of the Regions		
6.3	European associations of local and regional authorities		
<b>7.</b>	<b>National delegations</b> Rapporteurs : Xavier CADORET, France (L, SOC/G/PD) Aleksandra MALETIĆ, Serbia (R, EPP/CCE)		
	Changes in the composition of the national delegations	<a href="#">CG-BUR(2022)47-73</a>	<i>Dec.</i>
<b>8.</b>	<b>43rd Session of the Congress, 25-27 October 2022</b>		
8.1	Schedule of meetings	<a href="#">CG(2022)43-01</a>	<i>Info.</i>
8.2	Approval of the draft agenda	<a href="#">CG(2022)43-OJ</a>	<i>Dec.</i>
	Venice Commission Code of Good practice on Referendums	<a href="#">CG(2022)43-21</a>	<i>Dec.</i>

8.3	Chairing of the plenary sittings	<a href="#">CG-BUR(2022)47-74</a>	<i>Info.</i>
8.4	Side-events	<a href="#">CG-BUR(2022)47-75</a>	<i>Dec.</i>
<b>9.</b>	<b>Activities of the committees</b>		<i>Info.</i>
	Meetings of committees	<b>20.09</b> <a href="#">CG-BUR(2022)47-76REV</a> <b>20.09</b> CG-MON(2022)5-DEC <b>20.09</b> CG-CUR(2022)3-DEC <b>23.09</b> CG-GOV(2022)2-DEC	<i>Dec.</i> <i>Info.</i> <i>Info.</i> <i>Info.</i>
<b>10.</b>	<b>Local and regional elections</b>	<a href="#">CG-BUR(2022)47-77</a>	<i>Info.</i>
	Bosnia and Herzegovina - 2 October 2022	<a href="#">CG-BUR(2022)47-81</a>	
	Slovenia – 20 November 2022		
<b>11.</b>	<b>Local and regional democracy</b>		<i>Info.</i>
	Türkiye - Situation of Nurhayat Altun and Leyla Güven		<i>Info.</i>
	Türkiye	<a href="#">CDL-AD(2020)011</a>	
<b>12.</b>	<b>Parliamentary Assembly (PACE)</b>	<a href="#">Link</a>	<i>Info.</i>
<b>13.</b>	<b>Intergovernmental sector</b>		<i>Info.</i>
13.1	4th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe	<a href="#">CG-BUR(2022)47-70</a>	
13.2	Committee of Ministers rapporteur groups: GR-DEM		
13.3	Intergovernmental committees: European Committee on Democracy and Governance (CDDG)	<a href="#">CDDG(2022)8 rev.</a>	
<b>14.</b>	<b>World Forum for Democracy (7-9 November 2022)</b>	<a href="#">Concept note</a> <a href="#">Programme</a> <a href="#">CG-BUR(2022)47-80</a>	<i>Info.</i>
<b>15.</b>	<b>European Committee of the Regions</b>	<a href="#">CG-BUR(2022)47-83</a>	<i>Info.</i>
<b>16.</b>	<b>Congress meetings</b>		<i>Info.</i>
	Congress meetings in 2022	<a href="#">CG-BUR(2022)47-78</a>	
	Congress sessions and Bureau meetings in 2023	<b>20.09</b> <a href="#">CG-BUR(2022)47-79REV</a>	<i>Dec.</i>
<b>17.</b>	<b>Other business</b>		
<b>18.</b>	<b>Adoption of the abridged report of the meeting</b>	CG-BUR(2022)47-DEC	<i>Dec.</i>
	<b>Close of the meeting</b>		
	<b>Date of the next meeting: 24 October 2022</b>		

### Appendix 3 – Statement of the Bureau

President of the Congress, Leendert Verbeek : **"so-called referendums organised in the occupied territories of Ukraine are a denial of the rule of law, human rights and democracy"**

Lelystad, 23 September 2022 – On the occasion its meeting on 23 September 2022, in Lelystad, the Netherlands, the Bureau of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, endorsed the President of the Congress' statements of 31 August and 5 September 2022 and issued the following statement:

"The Bureau of the Congress of the Council of Europe reiterates that the so-called "referendums" announced by the Russian Federation in the militarily occupied territories of Ukraine would be an abuse of this democratic instrument and a further attempt to destroy democracy and the rule of law in Ukraine".

These referendums are contrary to international law and the Constitution of Ukraine and, as such, are illegal and their results will be null and void. The recommendation adopted by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe in 2021, recalls that referendums, like any other electoral process, must take place in accordance with democratic principles and internationally recognized standards, in particular with respect for the rule of law and human rights.

We will never recognise any referendums organised under intimidation in the occupied territories of Ukraine. We reject this denial of the rule of law, human rights and democracy and reaffirm our commitment to the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of our member State Ukraine, within its internationally recognised borders. We also condemn the pressure exerted on the citizens of the occupied territories as well as the continuing abduction of local elected representatives. This is a clear attempt to intimidate the civilian population through coercion and suppress their resistance in the occupied territories.

The values that we defend of democracy, human rights and the rule of law throughout the continent do not weaken us, contrary to what some would have us believe, but strengthen us in our freedoms and our desire to build more inclusive, equitable and resilient societies."

See also:

- [Links to President's statements of 31/8 and 5/9](#)
- [Congress Declaration on the Russian Federation's war against Ukraine](#)
- [Russian Federation's war against Ukraine: special file](#)
- [Helping Ukraine - Cities4Cities](#)