

## The Bureau of the Congress

CG-BUR(2025)63-DEC  
11 February 2025

### **Meeting of the Bureau of the Congress Luxembourg, Luxembourg Monday 10 February 2025**

#### **Abridged report – List of items discussed and decisions taken**

1. The President of the Congress, Mr Marc COOLS, opened the meeting. The list of participants is set out in Appendix 1.
2. The Bureau adopted the revised 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, including on the implementation of the Congress priorities as revised following the Reykjavík Summit, as set out in document CG-BUR(2025)63-16.
5. The Bureau pursued its discussion on the Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine and took note of the recent developments.

It took note of elements to be included in a draft declaration on the reconstruction of Ukraine, to be adopted by the written procedure and submitted to the plenary for adoption at the 48th Congress session in March 2025.

6. The Bureau pursued its discussion on the situation in Georgia and took note of the recent developments. It took note of the opinion requested from the Venice Commission on the proposed amendments to the Electoral Code on the Georgian electoral system.

The Bureau heard the three Presidents' oral report of the high-level visit to Georgia conducted on 3-4 February 2025, held an exchange of views and adopted a statement on the urgent situation in Georgia (see Appendix 4). It appointed the 1st and 2nd Congress Vice-Presidents, Cecilia Dalman-Eek (Sweden, R, SOC/G/PD) and Bernd Vöhringer (Germany, L, EPP/CD), as Bureau rapporteurs on the Situation of local and regional democracy in Georgia and instructed them to present their report to the plenary during the 48th Congress Session on 25-27 March 2025.

7. The Bureau adopted a draft recommendation on the role of local and regional authorities in protecting and promoting social rights and fostering social development, as set out in the document CG-BUR(2025)63-04, to be submitted to the plenary for adoption at its 48<sup>th</sup> session in March 2025.
8. The Bureau appointed Ms Randi Mondorf (Denmark, R, ILDG) as Bureau co-rapporteur on the Congress budget and resources (subject to her agreement), together with Mr Konstantinos Koukas (Greece, L, EPP/CCE), and agreed to adopt by the written procedure a draft resolution to be submitted to the plenary for adoption at its 48th session in March 2025.

The Bureau took note of the membership of Congress political groups, as set out in document CG-BUR(2025)63-11.

9. The Bureau took note of the schedule of meetings of the 48th Session of the Congress, as set out in document CG(2024)48-01, and approved the preliminary draft agenda of the session as set out in document CG(2024)48-OJ.

It took note of the information on youth delegates in 2025 and approved the side events as set out in the document CG-BUR(2025)63-08.

10. The Bureau approved the updates to Administrative Rule No. 9 on the organisation of side events during sessions of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, as set out in document CG-BUR(2025)63-09.

11. The Bureau held an exchange of views with the President of the Chamber of Deputies of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, Mr Claude Wiseler, the President of the Luxembourg delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Mr Gusty Graas, and the President of the Syndicat des villes et communes du Luxembourg (SYVICOL) and of the Luxembourg delegation to the Congress, Mr Emile Eicher.

12. The Bureau held an exchange of views with Ambassador André Biever, President of the European Institute of Cultural Routes, Director of Consular Affairs and International Cultural Relations, Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs, Luxembourg, and Mr François Moyse, President of the European Route for Jewish Heritage.

13. The Bureau took note of the workplans and activities of the committees and approved revised terms of reference for the activities of the Committee on Social Inclusion as set out in document CG-BUR(2025)63-10.

14. The Bureau took note of the information on local and regional elections.

15. The Bureau took note of co-operation activities of the Congress in member States and neighbouring regions.

16. The Bureau pursued its discussions on the possible opening of the European Charter of Local Self-Government (ETS No. 122) to non-member states.

17. The Bureau exchanged views on the situation of local and regional democracy in Türkiye, following further replacements of elected mayors by trustees appointed by the Ministry of the Interior in recent weeks. It invited the Monitoring Committee to follow up on this matter at its forthcoming meeting to be held in Strasbourg on 25 February 2025.

The Bureau examined the possible future participation of representatives of the Belarusian democratic forces in Congress sessions and meetings, and decided to invite representatives to participate as set out in Appendix 3.

The Bureau took note of the information on the situation of local democracy in Morocco.

The Bureau took note of the initial contacts established with the Deputies of Peaceful Russia Association, composed of former Russian local leaders of opposition forces currently living in exile.

18. The Bureau approved the themes and candidates for European Local Democracy Week (ELDW) 2025, as set out in document CG-BUR(2025)63-12.

19. The Bureau took note of the Committee of Ministers' reply to Congress Recommendation 510 (2024) "Local and regional responses to natural disasters and climate hazards: from risk preparedness to resilience" and of information on activities in the intergovernmental sector.

20. The Bureau took note of the communication on the activities of the Committee of Ministers presented to the Parliamentary Assembly on 27 January 2025 by Mr Xavier Bettel, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Luxembourg, Chair of the Committee of Ministers.

21. The Bureau took note of the activities of permanent rapporteurs and other holders of specific positions in 2024, as set out in document CG-BUR(2025)63-13.

22. The Bureau approved the changes in the composition of the national delegations, as set out in documents CG-BUR(2025)63-06 and CG-BUR(2025)63-06ADD.

23. The Bureau took note of the Calendar of Bureaux and sessions in 2025, as set out in the document CG-BUR(2025)63-15.

24. The Bureau agreed to pursue its work on strengthening the provisions of the Code of Conduct for Congress members with regard to harassment and took note that an event on visible and invisible obstacles to women's participation in politics was currently being planned in the margins of the Bureau meeting to be held in Malta, as part of the forthcoming Maltese Presidency of the Committee of Ministers, on 12 June 2025.

25. The Bureau adopted the present abridged report of the meeting, as set out in document CG-BUR(2025)63-DEC.

## **Appendix 1 – List of participants**

### **Members of the Bureau**

Marc COOLS, Belgium (L, ILDG), President of the Congress  
Cecilia DALMAN EEK, Sweden (R, SOC/G/PD), President of the Chamber of Regions  
Bernd VÖHRINGER, Germany (L, EPP/CCE) President of the Chamber of Local Authorities  
Gunn Marit HELGESEN, Norway (R, EPP/CCE)  
Xavier CADORET, France (L, SOC/G/PD)  
Jani KOKKO, Finland (L, SOC/G/PD)  
Martine DIESCHBURG-NICKELS, Luxembourg (L, ILDG)  
Harald SONDEREGGER, Austria (R, EPP/CCE)  
Oksana DERKACH, Ukraine (L, EPP/CCE)  
Andrew BOFF, United Kingdom (R, ECR)  
Konstantinos KOUKAS, Greece (L, EPP/CCE)

### **Chairs of committees**

Jelena DRENJANIN, Sweden (L, EPP/CCE), Governance Committee

### **Presidents of Congress political groups**

Anders KNAPE, Sweden (L, EPP/CCE)  
Bryony RUDKIN, United Kingdom (L, SOC/G/PD)  
Stewart DICKSON, United Kingdom (L, ILDG)  
Svitlana BOHATYRCHUK KRYVKO, Ukraine (R, ECR)

### **Secretariat**

Mathieu MORI, Secretary General of the Congress  
Claudia LUCIANI, Director of the Congress  
Daniel POPESCU, Executive Secretary of the Chamber of Regions  
Stephanie POIREL, Executive Secretary of the Chamber of Local Authorities  
Sarah BURTON, Head of the Table Office and Secretary of the Bureau  
Euan RODDIN, Head of the Statutory Activities Division  
Katyana VASILEVA, Assistant to the Table Office  
Sanja LESKOVAC, Assistant to the Table Office

**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(2025)63-OJ</a><br><a href="#">CG-BUR(2024)62-DEC</a>         | <i>Dec.</i><br><i>Info.</i>  |
| <b>3.</b> | <b>Communication by the President of the Congress</b>   |   |                              |
|           | Missions and meetings of the President of the Congress  | <a href="#">CG-BUR(2025)63-01</a>   | <i>Info.</i>                 |
| <b>4.</b> | <b>Communication by the Secretary General of the Congress</b>   |   |                              |
| 4.1       | Reykjavík summit: Implementation of revised Congress priorities   | <a href="#">RES 493 (2023)</a><br><b>6.02</b> <a href="#">CG-BUR(2025)63-16</a> | <i>Info.</i><br><i>Info.</i> |
| 4.2       | Missions and meetings of the Secretary General of the Congress  | <a href="#">CG-BUR(2025)63-02</a>   | <i>Info.</i>                 |
| <b>5.</b> | <b>Russian Federation’s war of aggression against Ukraine</b>   |   | <i>Info.</i>                 |
| 5.1       | Recent developments   |   |                              |
| 5.2       | Preliminary draft declaration on the reconstruction of Ukraine  |   | <i>Dec.</i>                  |
|           | Rapporteurs :<br>Martine DIESCHBURG-NICKELS, Luxembourg (L, ILDG)<br>Gunn Marit HELGESEN, Norway (R, EPP/CCE)   |   |                              |
| <b>6.</b> | <b>Situation in Georgia</b>   |   |                              |
| 6.1       | Recent developments   |   | <i>Info.</i>                 |
| 6.2       | Request for an opinion from the Venice Commission   |   | <i>Info.</i>                 |
| <b>7.</b> | <b>Second World Summit for Social Development</b>   |   |                              |
|           | Preliminary draft recommendation on the role of local and regional authorities in protecting and promoting social rights and fostering social development | <a href="#">CG-BUR(2025)63-04</a>   | <i>Dec.</i>                  |
|           | Rapporteurs :<br>Martine DIESCHBURG-NICKELS, Luxembourg (L, GILD)<br>Harald SONDEREGGER, Austria (R, PPE/CCE)   |   |                              |
| <b>8.</b> | <b>Budget of the Congress</b>   |   |                              |
| 8.1       | Membership of Congress political groups   | <a href="#">CG-BUR(2025)63-11</a>   | <i>Info.</i>                 |

8.2	Preliminary draft resolution on the Congress budget and resources		<i>Dec.</i>
	Rapporteurs : Konstantinos KOUKAS, Greece (L, EPP/CCE) ..., ... (R, ...)		
<b>9.</b>	<b>48<sup>th</sup> Session of the Congress, 25-27 March 2025</b>		
9.1	Schedule of meetings	<a href="#">CG(2024)48-01</a>	<i>Info.</i>
9.2	Elections during the session	<a href="#">CG-BUR(2025)63-17</a>	<i>Info.</i>
9.3	Approval of the draft agenda	<a href="#">CG(2024)48-OJ</a>	<i>Dec.</i>
9.4	Youth delegates in 2025		<i>Info.</i>
9.5	Side events	<a href="#">CG-BUR(2025)63-08</a>	<i>Dec.</i>
<b>10.</b>	<b>Amendments to the Rules and Procedures of the Congress</b>		
	Updating of Administrative Rule No. 9 on the organisation of side events during sessions of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities	<a href="#">CG-BUR(2025)63-09</a>	<i>Dec.</i>
	Rapporteur : Xavier CADORET, France (L, SOC/V/DP) Gunn Marit HELGESEN, Norway (R, EPP/CCE)		
<b>11.</b>	<b>[11h00] Exchange of views with representatives of the Luxembourg authorities</b>		
<b>12.</b>	<b>[14h00] Exchange of views with representatives of the European Institute of Cultural Routes (IEIC)</b>		
<b>13.</b>	<b>Activities of the committees</b>	<a href="#">CG-BUR(2025)63-10</a> <a href="#">Workplan SOC</a> <a href="#">Workplan GOV</a> <a href="#">Workplan MON</a>	<i>Dec.</i>
<b>14.</b>	<b>Local and regional elections</b>		<i>Info.</i>
<b>15.</b>	<b>Co-operation activities of the Congress in member States and neighbouring regions</b>		<i>Info.</i>
<b>16.</b>	<b>Opening of the European Charter of Local Self-Government (ETS No. 122) to non-member states</b>		<i>Info.</i>
<b>17.</b>	<b>Local and regional democracy</b>		
17.1	Türkiye		<i>Info.</i>

17.2	Belarus	<a href="#">CG-BUR(2025)63-18</a>	<i>Dec.</i>
17.3	Morocco		<i>Info.</i>
<b>18.</b>	<b>European Local Democracy Week (ELDW)</b>		
	Themes and candidates for 2025	<a href="#">CG-BUR(2025)63-12</a>	<i>Dec.</i>
<b>19.</b>	<b>Intergovernmental sector</b>		
19.1	Committee of Ministers' reply to texts adopted by the Congress	<b>5.02</b> <a href="#">CM/Cong(2025)Rec510-final</a>	<i>Info.</i>
19.2	CDDEM (Steering committee on Democracy)		<i>Info.</i>
<b>20.</b>	<b>Parliamentary Assembly</b>	<a href="#">Communication on the activities of the CM</a>	<i>Info.</i>
<b>21.</b>	<b>Permanent rapporteurs on human rights, thematic spokespersons and representatives of the Congress in external bodies</b>		
21.1	Activities of permanent rapporteurs and other holders of specific positions in 2024	<b>5.02</b> <a href="#">CG-BUR(2025)63-13REV</a>	<i>Info.</i>
21.2	Appointments to vacant positions	<a href="#">CG-BUR(2025)63-14</a>	<i>Dec.</i>
<b>22.</b>	<b>National delegations</b>		
	Changes in the composition of national delegations	<a href="#">CG-BUR(2025)63-06</a> <b>7.02</b> <a href="#">CG-BUR(2025)63-06ADD</a>	<i>Dec.</i> <i>Dec.</i>
	Rapporteurs : Andrew BOFF, United Kingdom (R, ECR) Martine DIESCHBURG-NICKELS, Luxembourg (L, ILDG)		
<b>23.</b>	<b>Congress sessions and Bureau meetings</b>		
	Calendar of Bureaux and sessions in 2025	<a href="#">CG-BUR(2025)63-15</a>	<i>Info.</i>
<b>24.</b>	<b>Other business</b>		
<b>25.</b>	<b>Adoption of the abridged report of the meeting</b>	CG-BUR(2025)63-DEC	<i>Dec.</i>
	<b>Close of the meeting</b>		
	<b>Date and place of the next meeting: Strasbourg, Monday 24 March 2025</b>		

### **Appendix 3 – Future participation of representatives of the Belarusian democratic forces in Congress sessions and meeting**

The Bureau decided:

- i. to appoint a Congress rapporteur for a democratic Belarus who shall be entrusted with following the situation in this regard and keeping the Bureau informed of key developments, including in relation to the Belarusian democratic forces and civil society;
- ii. to invite the Co-ordination Council to appoint from among its members elected on 25-27 May 2024 three representatives of the Belarusian democratic forces to attend the sessions of the Congress and its Chambers to be held in 2025 and the committee meetings held during these sessions; three substitutes may also be appointed, each of whom may replace a representative should the need arise;
- iii. in making these appointments, the Co-ordination Council shall ensure fair representation of the political parties, groups or factions within the Co-ordination Council and shall include amongst the representatives and amongst the substitutes at least one member of the gender that is less well represented in the Co-ordination Council;
- iv. the Co-ordination Council shall transmit the list of persons appointed to the President of the Congress by the closing date for registration for the first session of the Congress following this Bureau decision;
- v. the representatives, or the substitutes duly replacing them, shall have the right to speak in the above-mentioned sessions, subject to the consent of the President of the Congress or of the relevant Chamber, and in the above-mentioned committee meetings, subject to the consent of the chairperson of the committee; they shall not have the right to vote;
- vi. the Co-ordination Council may appoint one secretary/advisor to assist the representatives and substitutes, who may accompany them to sessions and committee meetings, without the right to speak or vote;
- vii. the representatives of Belarusian democratic forces may participate in meetings of the political groups of the Congress at the discretion of the groups themselves and according to the conditions established by the groups;
- viii. travel and subsistence expenses arising from the participation of the representatives and, if applicable, their secretary/advisor, shall not be charged to the ordinary budget of the Congress;
- ix. the Bureau shall take stock of the implementation of this decision in December 2025, or earlier should this be considered necessary, with a view, as appropriate, to its renewal or modification or to the termination of the above arrangements.



**Appendix 4 – Congress Bureau Statement on the urgent situation Georgia**

The Congress Bureau calls on the government of Georgia to fully respect European standards in human rights, democracy and the rule of law, paving the way to free and fair repeat elections at the national level, free and fair elections at the local level and the just treatment of all Georgians, including locally elected representatives.

Following a visit to the country by the Congress President, 1st and 2nd Vice-Presidents and Secretary General (3-4 February) and building on previous statements, the Bureau is clear that the Georgian authorities should begin by taking immediate steps to address the extreme political and social polarization that is harming their country. They should ensure the independence of law enforcement agencies, the judiciary, and all public institutions. Public servants at local and national levels have been removed from their positions for political reasons. This practice must stop.

Similarly, everyone should be allowed to exercise their democratic rights to freedom of expression and freedom of assembly and association. Peaceful protest is integral to democratic societies. Those currently detained for their non-violent participation in protests against the government should therefore be released. This includes national and local politicians and journalists such as Mzia Amaglobeli, about whom the Congress expresses its specific concern.

In taking this approach, the Georgian government must change its position and make clear its commitment to genuine, open and constructive dialogue with the opposition. This return to democratic norms and standards should ensure the trust required for the opposition to engage with the government and to end their boycott of institutions. In turn, this should pave the way to new national elections, based on European standards and the recommendations made by international observers notably following the elections held in October 2024, and also facilitate progress towards free and fair local elections. In this respect, the Georgian authorities should cooperate with the Venice Commission on the opinion requested by the Congress on the most recent amendments to the Electoral Code. The next local elections are due to be held in October of this year. Holding them under the current conditions poses the risk of exacerbating the situation. Therefore, without a substantive change in the political environment, those elections should be postponed.

The Bureau believes in a democratic, European future that serves the interests of all Georgians. This requires the participation of all political actors, at every level of government, including the ruling party and the opposition and civil society to resume the dialogue.

The Congress stands ready to provide whatever support possible in achieving that end. There will be a debate on Georgia during the next Congress session to be held on 25-27 March 2025.