

THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

Resolution 237 (2007)¹ Community policing: local and regional authorities guaranteeing a new partnership

1. Recent increases in insecurity and a deteriorating quality of life in European towns and cities would suggest that our current law enforcement systems are no longer sufficient. The population see insecurity as a growing phenomenon, and this perception of a worsening situation is fuelling mutual incomprehension between the forces responsible for security and the population.

2. In this context, some member states appear to be favouring a new approach to urban security issues that prioritises a relationship between the police and the citizens based on trust, service and co-operation.

3. The Council of Europe advocates ensuring the real and perceived security of European citizens, as well as their well-being. This was why, at the Warsaw Summit, the heads of state and government of the Council of Europe's member countries proclaimed their determination to "ensure security for our citizens", and also included this goal in the Action Plan which they adopted on that occasion.

4. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe is anxious to bring citizens closer to the forces responsible for guaranteeing their security, who must be supported by the population if they are to be efficient and democratic. In this connection it refers to its Resolution 220 (2006) on urban security in Europe and Resolution 180 (2004) on local policing in Europe.

5. The Congress would like to continue the previous work on local policing and urban security by highlighting the role of local and regional authorities in establishing local police forces.

6. In countries which have already introduced community policing, the local and regional authorities have often demonstrated their unifying central function through a partnership for security aimed at bringing the population groups and the professionals responsible for security (the police and the judiciary) closer together.

7. In view of the above, the Congress invites the local and regional authorities of member states to:

a. use their influence to impress on their governments the importance of establishing community-based policing systems;

b. establish partnerships on the basis of joint resourcing between local institutional (e.g. health authorities, fire services) and voluntary sector players complementing the work of the police, by means of co-ordinating bodies with responsibility for ascertaining problems on the basis of specific data, defining realistic objectives, proposing the requisite action and resources and assessing the results obtained;

c. give citizens a sense of responsibility as individuals and as members of the community, in order to promote awareness of the fact that security concerns everyone, by actively helping to prevent crime and supporting police work, while reassuring those who are experiencing feelings of fear and isolation;

d. create the conditions for optimum communication between the police forces and the local authorities by introducing mechanisms for ongoing exchange;

e. bring young people and police officers closer together by organising visits by local officers to schools with a view to establishing dialogue;

f. facilitate partnership between the police and the local media so that the latter, aware of urban security issues, is encouraged to support police work, to become involved in crime prevention and to adopt a measured approach to reporting street crime and other incidents involving the police forces;

g. design public areas and infrastructures with the help of the police in such a way as to increase urban security and provide the police with appropriate premises to house neighbourhood police units;

h. conduct specific work in sensitive neighbourhoods with a view to enhancing them by encouraging social participation by inhabitants and promoting their cultural identity;

i. support police work through such social actions as funding neighbourhood associations, social and cultural mediators, projects for integration through work and programmes for reducing school dropout rates;

j. submit proposals to the relevant police authorities for "test areas" in which to try out this new partnership for urban security.

8. Furthermore, the Congress invites the relevant police officials to:

a. ensure that police force membership reflects the diversity of the local population and introduce a recruitment, training and internal promotion policy which enhances the local approach and local loyalties with a view to improving knowledge of local areas;

b. making police services more accessible by introducing such specific facilities as emergency telephones, stationing community support officers across the local area in co-operation with the local authorities, along with a local phone number and an online service (“electronic police stations”).

9. The Congress commits itself to continuing its work on security policies and asks its Committee on Social Cohesion

to **organise a conference on this subject with a particular emphasis on the contribution of local and regional authorities to community policing and to a partnership for security.**

1. Debated and adopted by the Congress on 31 May 2007, 2nd Sitting (see Document CG(14)8RES, draft resolution presented by D. Lloyd-Williams (United Kingdom, R, ILDG), rapporteur).