

## 36th SESSION

# Financial compensation of local and regional elected representatives in the exercise of their office

### Resolution 443 (2019)<sup>1</sup>

1. The right and ability of all citizens to stand for elected office is a fundamental principle of local democracy, established in Article 7 of the European Charter of Local Self-Government. Material concerns should not prevent any citizen from standing for office. Article 7.2 of the Charter aims to ensure that local elected representatives receive sufficient allowances, salaries or other forms of compensation for their duties.

2. It follows that local and regional elected representatives need to receive adequate and appropriate financial compensation in order to carry out their duties effectively. As demands on local and regional politicians become more complex, financial compensation packages need to be adjusted accordingly.

3. The diversity of compensation packages and arrangements available for local and regional representatives in Europe, which mirrors the rich spectrum of forms and structures of subnational government in Europe, must not conceal the fact that the principle of adequate compensation is valid for all. While this principle needs to be applied flexibly, it nevertheless needs to enable citizens to consider standing for office whatever their socioeconomic status.

4. Inappropriate and inadequate levels of compensation can and do discourage many suitable candidates from running for elected office. Any deterioration in the quality of candidates is harmful to the overall quality of governance of local and regional authorities. Dissatisfaction in the levels of compensation can also harm the effectiveness of elected candidates and increase the risk of corruption and illegitimate practices.

5. Since all member States of the Council of Europe now have some form of financial compensation in place for local and regional elected representatives, it is to be regretted that 13 member States have yet to ratify Article 7.2, whereas recent monitoring missions of the Congress have established that several of these member States have seen their national legislations evolve to a point where they can be considered to be in compliance with this article.

6. Recommendation 385 (2015) of the Congress on Conditions of office of elected representatives set out several principles for member States on how best to apply Article 7.2.

7. In the light of the above, the Congress, bearing in mind:

- a. Recommendation 385 (2015) of the Congress on Conditions of office of elected representatives;
- b. The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) report on the Status of local elected representatives in Europe (2010);

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<sup>1</sup> Debated and adopted by the Congress on 3 April 2019, 2nd sitting (see Document [CG36\(2019\)10](#), explanatory memorandum), co-rapporteurs: Marta CAMPANARI-TALABER, Hungary (L, EPP/CCE) and Robert GRUMAN, Romania (R, EPP/CCE).

8. Calls upon local and regional authorities of the member States of the Council of Europe to:
  - a. ensure that forms of financial compensation are commensurate with the needs and responsibilities of local and regional representatives;
  - b. engage with their national authorities on how best to apply the provisions of Recommendation 385 (2015) pertaining to Article 7.2;
  - c. carry out regular, independent audits on the forms and levels of compensation and the satisfaction of local and regional representatives with these arrangements;
  - d. assess on a regular basis the appropriateness and adequacy of different forms of financial compensation for local and regional representatives, proposing adjustments as appropriate, in view of the evolving tasks and duties of representatives.
9. Calls on national associations of local and regional authorities to:
  - a. report on any instances of backsliding or potential backsliding with regard to the application of Article 7.2;
  - b. where Article 7.2 has not been ratified, or national legislation with regard to the remuneration of local and regional representatives is inexistent, lobby government to ratify or introduce such legislation;
  - c. consult with local and regional representatives, to gauge remuneration satisfaction and develop a greater picture of what constitutes appropriate and adequate financial compensation for their respective duties.
10. Resolves to prepare reports at regular intervals on the evolution of the situation regarding the financial compensation of local and regional elected representatives in member States.