

THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

Recommendation 282 (2010)¹ Follow-up by the Congress to the Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Local and Regional Government (Utrecht, Netherlands, 16-17 November 2009)

1. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe welcomes the substantive discussions held at the 16th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Local and Regional Government in Utrecht on 16 and 17 November 2009, which confirmed member governments' commitment to continuing and further developing the Council of Europe's activities in the field of local and regional democracy.

2. The Congress notes that the Additional Protocol to the European Charter of Local Self-Government on the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority (CETS No. 207) and Protocol No. 3 to the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities concerning Euroregional Co-operation Groupings (ECGs) (CETS No. 206) were signed by a large number of countries during the conference, bearing witness to this commitment. It sincerely hopes that other signatures will follow shortly.

3. In view of the growing importance of the regional tier of governance, it believes that the Reference Framework for Regional Democracy, which the ministers responsible for local and regional government took note of at the conference, is a major initial step in the process of strengthening regional democracy.

4. It is therefore pleased by the ministers' recommendation that the Congress and the Parliamentary Assembly use the reference framework when considering institutional and governance reforms at the regional level and by the inclusion of the text in the conference final declaration.

5. The Congress also welcomes the report by Ms M. Kiviniemi, Minister of Public Administration and Local Government of Finland, on enhancing the work of the Council of Europe in the field of local and regional democracy, which is a major contribution to discussion of the subject.

6. The Congress would nevertheless like to draw attention to the joint position it adopted with the Parliamentary Assembly regarding the document, underlining, in particular, the importance of the diversity of the Council of Europe's political organs, which is a mark of its originality and the uniqueness of its contribution.

7. At the same time, the Congress supports the Kiviniemi report's proposal that co-operation with the European Committee on Local and Regional Democracy (CDLR) be stepped up as regards monitoring of the application of the European Charter of Local Self-Government (STE No. 122). With reference to Committee of Ministers Statutory Resolution CM/Res(2007)6, the Congress will continue to give top priority to its monitoring activities and believes there is a need for the CDLR to follow up the resulting recommendations at intergovernmental level.

8. In the light of the above, the Congress asks the Committee of Ministers to:

a. take note of these comments on the Kiviniemi report and to continue guaranteeing the diversity of the organs and activities of the Council of Europe which are its key asset in the field of local and regional democracy, while also ensuring a level of inter- and intra-institutional co-operation that enables tangible results to be achieved;

b. encourage member governments to take account of the Reference Framework for Regional Democracy when formulating policies for the regional level or in the context of relevant institutional reforms;

c. sign up to the provisions of the Utrecht Final Declaration with regard to European Local Democracy Week and to support and encourage the activity, in particular by promoting the event and its results among governments of member states.

1. Debated and adopted by the Congress on 18 March 2010, 2nd Sitting (see Document CG(18)7, explanatory memorandum), rapporteurs: K. Andersen (Denmark, R, ILDG) and J.-C. Frécon (France, L, SOC).