

THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

Resolution 299 (2010)¹ Follow-up by the Congress of 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 quality of discussions held during the 16th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Local and Regional Government (Utrecht, 16-17 November 2009), which demonstrates the interest in principles of local and regional democracy.

2. It maintains that promoting local and regional democracy is a priority for the Council of Europe, which encourages its member states to adapt their local and regional government structures in accordance with democratic values and the rule of law.

3. The European Charter of Local Self-Government (ETS No. 122) is a particularly effective instrument for encouraging the development of local democracy in those Council of Europe member states that have ratified it. The charter monitoring activities in these states show that it is recognised as being of fundamental importance and a keystone of local democracy throughout Europe.

4. The Congress considers that the absence of a binding legal instrument on regional democracy, to act as the regional counterpart of the European Charter of Local Self-Government, creates a wide gap in the Council of Europe's legislation on regional democracy.

5. It refers in this context to the view it expressed at the 16th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Local and Regional Government in connection with the Reference Framework for Regional Democracy, where the Congress argued that a political and legal instrument on regional democracy would make a substantial contribution to the development of regional institutions in Europe and strengthen respect for the subsidiarity principle at regional level.

6. The Congress therefore welcomes the Reference Framework for Regional Democracy, which the ministers responsible for local and regional government noted and appended to the final declaration of their 16th conference in Utrecht.

7. The Congress considers that this text constitutes a basic political document for all issues pertaining to regional governance, and is a preliminary step towards a binding legal instrument.

8. The Congress will actively use the Reference Framework for Regional Democracy in its work, in particular in its monitoring activities, where the Congress will use it alongside the European Charter of Local Self-Government.

9. The Congress invites its members to pay the closest attention to the Reference Framework for Regional Democracy, with a view to:

a. promoting it and giving it maximum visibility in their national and regional institutions, when they co-operate with their governments on institutional reforms, and in international bodies where issues relating to regional democracy are considered;

b. using it in their contacts with their European counterparts when they carry out visits to Council of Europe member states on behalf of the Congress.

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).