

CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES OF EUROPE

Recommendation 99 (2001)¹ on international co-operation at regional level

The Congress, following a proposal by the Chamber of Regions,

1. Considering:

a. that international co-operation at regional level is currently developing rapidly all over Europe as:

i. it is a particularly effective vector for European integration and for bringing people together;

ii. it is also a major factor in economic development;

b. that all the regions of Europe are not necessarily on an equal footing in terms of the constitutional, administrative and practical opportunities for effectively engaging in transnational co-operation activities;

c. that certain obstacles and opportunities in respect of international co-operation between regions depend on decisions taken by the member states;

2. Recommends that the member states:

a. create a climate and conditions conducive to flourishing international co-operation between regions;

b. eliminate any legal and administrative hindrances or obstacles to international co-operation between regions and envisage creating appropriate legal frameworks or statuses for territories, particularly transfrontier regions, where large-scale co-operation is developed;

c. work towards the adoption, with minimum delay, of the charter of regional self-government, as the establishment and strengthening of regional bodies are essential conditions for the development of international co-operation between regions;

d. ratify the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities and its two protocols if they have not already done so and, where necessary, conclude bilateral agreements to facilitate the implementation of the said convention;

e. strengthen the place of the regions on the bi- or trilateral intergovernmental committees responsible for spatial planning and regional policy along the borders between certain member states;

f. work within the European bodies and in particular the European Union institutions to foster support for

interregional co-operation and to ensure that advantage is taken of the results of this co-operation in the preparation and implementation of European policies;

g. involve the regions closely in the implementation of the European Union's transnational and interregional co-operation programmes and facilitate transnational contacts with a view to fostering new co-operation projects;

h. grant the least privileged regions the financial resources they need in order to participate effectively in interregional co-operation activities and particularly EU interregional co-operation programmes requiring joint financing by the regions;

i. encourage the regions to join together in interregional partnerships, in particular with the Council of Europe's new member states in central and eastern Europe;

j. foster partnerships and the creation of interregional networks in South-eastern Europe as contributions to political and democratic stability in the region;

k. support regions in their efforts to share their experience of the transformation of the economic and commercial fabric, in order to make them more competitive in the European and world markets, particularly by promoting mobility of the labour force and appropriate high-tech and specialised education for the young generation;

l. encourage the regions to form networks, in particular to foster exchanges and mobility of young people, scientists and regional government officials, in order to contribute to the social and cultural openness essential to co-operation and integration in Europe;

m. include representatives of the regions in their delegations to the Council of Europe's intergovernmental steering committees, in their particular fields of competence;

3. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe:

a. acknowledge the important contribution which co-operation between regions in Europe makes to democratic and political stability in the member states and to their economic, environmental, cultural and social development, and to introduce a regional dimension into the Organisation's intergovernmental activities, particularly in the fields of social cohesion, the environment, culture and education, in order to take advantage of the experience of the regions, which work on a level closer to the citizen;

b. reserve a suitable place for the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe in its special assistance programmes in favour of the Council of Europe's new member states, in order to enable the Congress, within its own sphere of competence, to contribute to democratic stability in these countries by helping them to set up and run democratic bodies at the local and regional levels.

1. Debated and approved by the Chamber of Regions on 29 May 2001 and adopted by the Standing Committee of the Congress on 31 May 2001 (see Doc. CPR (8) 2 draft recommendation presented by Mr D. Vierin, rapporteur).

