

THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

Resolution 297 (2010)¹ Launch of the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (EMRLA) and role of the Congress

1. Political dialogue and active multidisciplinary co-operation between Europe and the countries of the southern and eastern Mediterranean are vital preconditions for the political stability and socio-economic development of the Mediterranean Basin.

2. At all its institutional levels, the Council of Europe has always been open to contacts and relations with the south-eastern region of the Mediterranean Basin.

3. For its part, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, being convinced that co-operation at local and regional authority level is vital in order to guarantee governance based on the fundamental values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law, has been particularly attentive to the links with the countries of this region and to activities concerning local democracy.

4. The quality of the dialogue that the Congress already conducts with specific countries on the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean Basin can only encourage it to continue and intensify its efforts.

5. Furthermore, the relaunch of the Barcelona Process under the French initiative of the Union for the Mediterranean is a major opportunity which Europe must seize.

6. Consequently, the Congress fully agrees with the European Union Committee of the Regions' view that it is vital – in view of the institutional advances made by the local and regional authorities on the European stage – for the local and regional level to be duly taken into account in the European governance of the Union for the Mediterranean.

7. It is in this same spirit that the Congress is convinced of the importance and role of the EMPA (Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly), which can support, at the parliamentary level, the legislative processes required for institutional advances, notably at the local and regional level.

8. It therefore welcomes the Committee of the Regions' initiative to set up the EMRLA as a political assembly in which local and regional representatives of Europe and the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean can meet to discuss practical co-operation projects.

9. Like the EMRLA, the Congress is convinced that this dialogue must also serve the advance of local democracy and decentralisation in the countries of the southern and eastern Mediterranean.

10. The Congress welcomes its observer status with the EMRLA and is convinced that, like the other EMRLA partner bodies and associations, it is important for it to be able to contribute to the process.

11. In the light of the above, the Congress:

a. decides to:

i. fully support the EMRLA and the relaunch of the Barcelona Process by the Union for the Mediterranean;

ii. co-operate with the Committee of the Regions and the EMRLA, with its know-how and experience in the fields of local democracy and decentralisation;

iii. ask its working group to take account of the Congress' involvement in this venture when defining its future priorities and activities;

b. invites the local and regional authorities of its member countries and their associations to forge bilateral relations with authorities in the countries of the southern and eastern Mediterranean Basin.

1. Debated and adopted by the Congress on 17 March 2010, 1st Sitting (see Document CG(18)8, explanatory memorandum), rapporteurs: I. Micallef (Malta, L, EPP/CD) and L. Sfirloaga (Romania, R, SOC).