

CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES OF EUROPE

Resolution 124 (2001)¹ on local and regional democracy in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

The Congress,

1. Welcoming the excellent work of the mayors of the so-called “free” towns which, since 1996, have been governed by the democratic opposition, who, at local level, have encouraged the development of participatory democracy and peaceful resistance to the regime of Slobodan Milošević;

2. Recalling the presence of 700 000 refugees and displaced persons in Yugoslavia and the socio-economic difficulties facing the municipalities of Serbia and Montenegro in dealing with this problem;

3. Convinced that the setting up of local democratic structures will help to strengthen pluralist democracy;

4. Welcoming the work carried out by the Subotica Local Democracy Agency, set up in 1993 under the aegis of the Congress and which, despite difficult working conditions, has continued since then to uphold human rights, pluralist local democracy and transfrontier co-operation, in partnership with local authorities;

5. Congratulating the Yugoslav authorities and the Standing Conference of the Towns and Municipalities of Yugoslavia and the Union of Municipalities of Montenegro on having agreed upon a procedure for the appointment of members of the special guest delegation to the Congress [and on the appointment of a delegation in keeping with the provisions of the Congress charter];

6. Taking account of the wishes of the competent authorities in Serbia, in particular the representatives of the Parliament of Serbia, to promote the pooling of information and good practice relating to regionalisation;

7. Noting the work done by the Congress through the organisation of the Forums of Cities and Regions of South-east Europe to promote the setting up of political and technical partnerships between local and regional authorities in Europe and South-east Europe;

8. Bearing in mind the establishment of the Niksic Local Democracy Agency (Montenegro) in May 2001 and the commitment to this project shown by local authorities in Montenegro;

9. Noting the efforts made by the local authorities in Nis, Kragujevac, Leskovac and Kraljevo and by European cities, regions and NGOs to set up a regional LDA in Nis (Serbia);

10. Congratulating the Nis local authorities on the measures they have taken to step up co-operation in border

regions of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”, by means of a partnership between the towns of Nis, Skopje and Sofia, which was inaugurated during the Nis Conference, held from 17 to 19 September 2001 and organised by the Council of Europe, the town of Nis and the East West Institute, with the support of the federal Yugoslav authorities;

11. Welcoming other recent initiatives to promote transfrontier and interregional co-operation, especially:

a. co-operation between Vojvodina (Federal Republic of Yugoslavia), Tuzla Canton (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Osijek Zupanija (Croatia);

b. the co-operation between the region of Vojvodina (Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) and the Zupanija of Istria (Croatia);

12. Thanking the Council of Europe and the donor states, in particular the Swiss, Irish and Belgian Governments, for the fundamental support they have given to the launching and continuation of LDA activities in Yugoslavia, through the Confidence-Building Measures Programme;

13. Invites the Bureau of the Congress to:

a. hold an information seminar on regionalisation in Serbia, as soon as possible, explaining to the competent Serb authorities the course taken by other European countries;

b. ensure that the members of the Yugoslavian delegation and the delegation of the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities of Yugoslavia and the Union of Municipalities of Montenegro take part in the multilateral activities organised by the Congress;

c. prepare a new report on the situation of local democracy, at the very latest once constitutional relations between Serbia and Montenegro have been redefined;

d. organise the observation of the next local elections in Montenegro (which should be held in 2002);

e. renew support for the Local Democracy Agencies, which make a useful and complementary contribution to the work of the Congress in developing local democracy, intercultural dialogue, civil society and transfrontier co-operation;

14. Invites the local and regional authorities of Europe to:

a. become involved in partnerships with the municipalities and towns of Serbia and Montenegro and take an active part in the 3rd Forum of the Cities and Regions of South-east Europe to be held in Novi Sad (18-20 April 2002);

b. provide special support for the work of Local Democracy Agencies in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

1. Debated and adopted by the Standing Committee of the Congress on 9 November 2001 (see Doc. CG (8) 24, draft resolution, presented by Mr L. Roppe and Mr L. Kieres, rapporteurs).