

# THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

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## **Resolution 354 (2013)<sup>1</sup> Local by-elections in Armenia (9 and 23 September 2012)**

1. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe recalls that the Republic of Armenia became a member of the Council of Europe on 25 January 2001.

2. The Congress notes with satisfaction that, in keeping with the European Charter of Local Self-Government (ETS No. 122), which was ratified by Armenia on 25 January 2002, the guiding principles of local self-government are enshrined in the constitution adopted in 1995 and revised in 2005, as well as in national legislation.

3. It firmly believes that, over and above national legislation and regulations it is important that local authorities play their full role in accordance with the principles of local democracy and that they are in a position to ensure effective governance in accordance with the subsidiarity principle and the European Charter of Local Self-Government.

4. The Congress welcomes the intention of the Armenian authorities to undertake reforms in the area of local democracy, in line with Congress Recommendation 140 (2003) on local democracy in Armenia.

5. The Congress underlines the fact that free and fair elections, at not only national but also local and regional level, are an integral part of democratic processes in Council of Europe member States.

6. It takes note of Recommendation 338 (2013) regarding the findings of the Congress delegation which observed the local by-elections in Armenia on 9 and 23 September 2012, and welcomes the fact that members of the Committee of the Regions of the European Union also took part in the observation.

7. It regrets the lukewarm interest shown in the local elections and deplores the fact that, despite the new provision of the electoral law giving political parties the possibility to appoint candidates, the majority of parties have shown little interest in the elections. It believes that municipalities' low level of own resources might be an obstacle to their political commitment.

8. Given the above, and in conformity with its Resolution 306 (2010) on observation of local and regional elections – strategy and rules of the Congress, the Congress:

*a.* asks its Monitoring Committee to take note of the above-mentioned recommendation and to take it into account in the framework of its work programme in order to assess the progress made by Armenia in matters of local democracy and the honouring of commitments to the European Charter of Local Self-Government;

*b.* expresses its will and availability to participate in activities aimed at strengthening local democracy and electoral processes in Armenia, through continued political dialogue with the authorities and in co-operation with the Union of Local Communities of Armenia;

*c.* is prepared, in particular, to commit itself to improving local governance in Armenia, and with this in mind, to implement the co-operation projects provided for in the Council of Europe 2012-2014 Action Plan for Armenia.

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1. Debated and approved by the Chamber of Local Authorities on 20 March 2013, and adopted by the Congress on 21 March 2013, 3rd Sitting (see Document CPL(24)2REV, explanatory memorandum, presented by Henry Feral, France (L, EPP/CCE), rapporteur).