

THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

Resolution 355 (2013)¹ Local elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina (7 October 2012)

1. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe recalls that Bosnia and Herzegovina became a member country of the Council of Europe on 24 April 2002 and ratified the European Charter of Local Self-Government (ETS No. 122) on 12 July 2002.

2. The Congress refers to its Report CG(22)12² as well as its Recommendation 324 (2012)³ on local and regional democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina which was adopted at the 22nd Session in March 2012 and which confirms the general compatibility of the country's legislation on local and regional self-government with the principles of the charter. It concludes that the legislative framework in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the entities has improved and that judicial protection of local self-government in both entities has increased.

3. It observes with satisfaction that the recommendations made by the Congress on the observation of local elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina on 5 October 2008 have been largely implemented and have led to improvements.

4. The Congress reiterates its conviction that free and fair elections, at national but also at local and regional level, constitute an integral part of democratic processes in Council of Europe member States and refers to the explanatory memorandum and the draft recommendation regarding the findings of the Congress delegation which observed the local elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina on 7 October 2012.

5. Given the above, and in conformity with its Resolution 306 (2010) on observation of local and regional elections – strategy and rules of the Congress, as well as the Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters (2002) of the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) of the Council of Europe, and the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation (2004), the Congress:

a. asks its Monitoring Committee to take note of the above-mentioned draft recommendation and to take it into account in the framework of its mission to assess the progress made by the country in honouring its commitments to the European Charter of Local Self-Government;

b. invites its Governance Committee to add the investigation of the issue of concurrent organisation of elections at different levels of government (national, regional and local) to its work programme in 2013-14. In this context the committee should also take into consideration current discussions on this matter in the Committee of the Regions of the European Union;⁴

c. expresses its will to participate in activities aimed at strengthening electoral processes and improving the situation of local and regional democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the framework of its existing post-monitoring dialogue.

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)3, explanatory memorandum, presented by Amy Koopmanschap, Netherlands (L, SOC), rapporteur).

2. Local and regional democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina (CG(22)12), rapporteurs: Beat Hirs, Switzerland (L, ILDG), and Jean-Marie Belliard, France (R, EPP/CD).

3. Local and regional democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Recommendation 324 (2012) Rapporteurs: Beat Hirs, Switzerland (L, ILDG), and Jean-Marie Belliard, France (R, EPP/CD).

4. Opinion of the Commission for Citizenship, Governance, Institutional and External Affairs: Strengthening EU citizenship: promotion of EU citizens' electoral rights, rapporteur: György Gémesi (HU/EPP), Mayor of Gödöllő.