

# THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

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## Resolution 348 (2012)<sup>1</sup> Local elections in Serbia (6 May 2012)

1. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe recalls that the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro joined the Council of Europe on 3 April 2003. Following the declaration of independence of the Republic of Montenegro on 3 June 2006, and in accordance with Article 60 of the Constitutional Charter of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted at their 967th meeting a declaration on the continuation of Serbia's membership in the Council of Europe – up till now the membership of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro – and the continuation of monitoring obligations and commitments.

2. The Congress notes with satisfaction that – based on the European Charter of Local Self-Government (ETS No. 122) which was ratified by the country on 6 September 2007 – the guiding principles of local self-government are secured in Serbian legislation and the right of citizens to local and regional self-government is guaranteed by the Serbian Constitution.

3. The Congress refers to its report on local and regional democracy in Serbia which was adopted at the 21st Session in October 2011 (Recommendation 316 (2011)) and states that the change of Serbia's status from being part of a federated State to an independent country has had a positive impact on the status of regional autonomy within the unitary State of Serbia. The proclamation of the Statute of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, in force since 1 January 2010, was an important step. At the same time, the Congress

notes that there is widespread acknowledgment of the need to further reform local self-government and strengthen the process of decentralisation in Serbia.

4. The Congress reiterates 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 it takes note of Recommendation 330 (2012) on local elections in Serbia regarding the findings of the Congress delegation who observed the local elections in Serbia on 6 May 2012.

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

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

*b.* invites its Bureau to use the change of legislation in Serbia, in respect of the election of mayors, as an opportunity to examine the different systems of mayoral elections currently in place in Council of Europe member States.

6. The Congress expresses its will and availability to participate in activities aimed at strengthening local democracy and electoral processes in Serbia, through continued political dialogue with the authorities and in co-operation with the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities of Serbia.

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1. Debated and approved by the Chamber of Local Authorities on 17 October 2012 and adopted by the Congress on 18 October 2012, 3rd Sitting (see Document [CPL\(23\)3](#), explanatory memorandum), rapporteur: N. Mermagen, United Kingdom (L, ILDG).