

THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

Recommendation 269 (2009)¹ Local elections in “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” (observed on 22 March 2009)

1. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe refers to:

a. the Committee of Ministers’ Statutory Resolution (2007) 6 on the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, in particular its Article 2, paragraph 4, entrusting the Congress with the preparation of reports and recommendations following the observation of local and/or regional elections;

b. the principles laid down in the European Charter of Local Self-Government (ECLSG) which was ratified by “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” on 6 June 1997 and entered into force on 1 October 1997;

c. its previous reports on elections monitored in “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” as well as reports on local and regional democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina;

d. its report on the local (municipal) elections in “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”, held on 22 March 2009, detailing the findings of the Congress observation mission.

2. Recalls its role in monitoring local and regional elections, based on the principle that holding local and regional elections in accordance with international electoral standards is essential for consolidating democracy and ensuring good governance.

3. Welcomes the progress made by the authorities and political parties in restoring the confidence of citizens through a democratic process.

4. Welcomes the fact that this election was conducted in line with Council of Europe and international standards.

5. Recommends, however, to:

a. promote the participation of women in political life and examine possible legislation for increased participation of women in political life as candidates for municipal councillors and mayors;

b. consider separating local and national elections in future to afford municipal polls their due importance;

c. undertake a thorough audit of voter lists in order to increase confidence about their accuracy;

d. provide better access to polling stations for disabled voters;

e. ensure that polling stations are sufficiently large to avoid overcrowding;

f. ensure training of members of electoral boards well before election day;

g. ensure that the non-smoking environment is respected, especially for polling stations located in school premises.

6. The Congress furthermore recommends that the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe take note of the present recommendation and the accompanying explanatory memorandum, and to transmit it to the authorities of “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”, to the relevant bodies of the intergovernmental sector, the Venice Commission, the Directorate General of Democracy and Political Affairs and the Commissioner for Human Rights.

7. It also invites the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe to take account of the recommendation in the framework of its monitoring procedure.

8. The Congress reaffirms its readiness to support and assist the authorities of “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” in their efforts to consolidate local democracy in conformity with commitments undertaken by “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” in respect of international electoral standards and of the European Charter of Local Self-Government.

1. Discussion and adoption by the Standing Committee of the Congress on 10 June 2009 (see document CG(16)16REP, rapporteur: P. Rondelli, Saint Marin (L, SOC)).