

THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

Resolution 200 (2005)¹ on natural and industrial disasters: local authorities facing emergencies

The Congress, bearing in mind the proposal of the Chamber of Local Authorities,

1. Having taken note of its Resolution 129 (2002) on local authorities confronting natural disasters and emergencies;
2. Reiterating its concern at the frequency of natural disasters, which often hit European towns and regions, but which most recently devastated Southeast Asia, destroying hundreds of thousands of lives;
3. Aware of the fact that most natural disasters are unpredictable and, hence, unavoidable;
4. Convinced that, in these circumstances, it is important to combine all efforts with a view to controlling events and managing the consequences as efficiently as possible in order to save human lives;
5. Considering that it is important that the different institutional levels work together, and that, in this context, local authorities have a vital role to play;
6. Anxious to help local authorities meet their responsibilities in the event of natural disasters, which result in the loss of human lives, situations of distress and extensive damage;
7. Aware of the experience acquired in some countries and by some local authorities, and of the importance of taking due account of such experience;

8. Drawing attention to the contribution made by the Council of Europe's Open Partial Agreement on Major Hazards (EUR-OPA) and welcoming the fruitful co-operation that this body has established with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA);

9. Sharing the opinion of the Chamber of Local Authorities on the potential value of a handbook drawing on the experience and knowledge acquired in this field and setting out essential measures for reacting in emergency situations,

10. Approves the handbook "40 measures for local authorities in dealing with natural hazards" prepared by the Committee on Sustainable Development and the Chamber of Local Authorities;

11. Asks the Bureau of the Congress and the Committee on Sustainable Development to:

a. disseminate the handbook as widely as possible through the members of the Congress, national associations of local authorities, bodies specialising in the training of local and regional authorities and non-governmental authorities, in particular those working in the fields of public safety and sustainable development;

b. continue to co-operate with organisations specialising in the management of natural disasters, such as the EUR-OPA partial agreement and the OCHA, in particular by seeking their support in setting up and operating a network of towns which have been victims of natural disasters and for the implementation of the present resolution;

c. pay special attention to the development of a "risk culture", the aim of which would be to help citizens to cope better with disasters.

1. Debated and approved by the Chamber of Local Authorities on 31 May 2005 and adopted by the Standing Committee of the Congress on 2 June 2005 (see Document CPL (12) 2, draft resolution presented by C. Filippone (Italy, L, EPP/CD) and R. Sinoyan (Armenia, R, EPP/CD), rapporteurs).