

THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

Resolution 165 (2003)¹ on NGOs and local and regional democracy

The Congress,

1. Having considered the report on “NGOs and local and regional democracy” presented by the rapporteur, Mr Bernard Suaud (France), following the conference on this subject in the Budapest European Youth Centre on 28 February and 1 March 2003, organised by the Congress, the Liaison Committee of INGOs enjoying consultative status with the Council of Europe, the NGOs Unit of the Directorate General of Political Affairs and the European Youth Centre in Budapest, with the support of the integrated project on “Making Democratic Institutions Work”;

2. Having fully acquainted itself with the Final Declaration – the so-called “Budapest Declaration” – adopted at the end of that conference, particularly paragraphs 15 to 21, on which this recommendation is very largely based;

3. Recalling that over the years it has actively sought to promote citizens’ local and regional participation in public life, particularly through:

a. CLRAE Opinion (CG/BUR (10) 62) on the Committee of Ministers preliminary draft resolutions on the partnership between the Council of Europe and national non-governmental organisations and on participatory status of international non-governmental organisations with the Council of Europe;

b. the Charter on the Participation of Young People in Municipal and Regional Life (Resolution 237 (1992) of the CLRAE) and Recommendation 128 (2003) and Resolution 152 (2003) on the revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life;

c. Resolution 91 (2000) of the CLRAE on responsible citizenship and participation in public life;

d. Opinion 15 (2001) of the CLRAE on Recommendation (2001) 19 of the Committee of Ministers to member states of the Council of Europe on participation of citizens in local public life and Recommendation 115 (2002) and Resolution 141 (2002) on the participation of foreign residents in local public life: consultative bodies;

4. Calls on local and regional authorities:

a. to organise, particularly through their specialist committees, regular meetings with the NGOs in their areas to review each other’s activities;

b. to consult NGOs in their areas on all matters of specific concern to them;

c. to encourage the formation of area groupings of NGOs or local associations that could act as a single consultative body for local and regional authorities as well as offering technical assistance to NGOs;

5. Calls on its Bureau:

a. to promote, in conjunction with the Liaison Committee of INGOs enjoying consultative status with the Council of Europe, the drafting of a memorandum of partnership between local and regional authorities and NGOs, defining each party’s rights and responsibilities;

b. co-operate more closely with the various subject groupings of the Liaison Committee of INGOs, according to the specific topics that Congress statutory committees are required to consider or reach a decision on, and in particular:

i. monitor the revision of the European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life and strengthen its application;

ii. undertake activities to promote the Council of Europe Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level;

iii. consult NGOs, as appropriate, during its visits to monitor local and regional democracy or observe local and regional elections;

iv. encourage the establishment of formal partnerships between local and regional authorities and NGOs to deal with environmental emergencies.

1. Debated and adopted by the Standing Committee of the Congress on 26 November 2003 (see Document CG (10) 23, draft resolution presented by Mr R. Ruocco on behalf of Mr B. Suaud, rapporteur).