

## THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

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### **Recommendation 183 (2006)<sup>1</sup> on North-South Centre: contribution of local and regional authorities to promote the efficiency of the work of the Centre**

The Congress,

1. Having been involved in the work of the centre since its creation and has also been represented on its Executive Council and Bureau, this statutory link shows the interest and the commitment of the Congress to contribute to its work;

2. Having examined the report on “the North-South Centre,” presented by Helen Lund (Denmark, SOC, L) on behalf of the Committee on Culture and Education and Resolution 206 (2006) on North-South Centre: contributions of local and regional authorities to promote the efficiency of the work of the Centre, which proposes a whole series of measures to be taken on the local and the regional level in this area;

3. Recalling:

*a.* Congress Recommendation 13 (1995) on New opportunities for National Associations of Local and Regional Authorities in North/South co-operation, which draws attention to the importance of decentralised international co-operation and acknowledged the role of national associations of local authorities as one of the principal means for co-ordinating, discussing and negotiating such co-operation;

*b.* Congress Recommendation 22 (1995) also dealing with “New opportunities for National Associations of Local and Regional Authorities in North/South co-operation”, which highlights that there is considerable scope for collaboration with more established local governments on, for example, management of democratic institutions, central/local government relations, housing policy, economic development, urban transport, land and water use and management, environmental policy, local government finance and taxation, public/private sector co-operation; and human resources management;

*c.* Congress Resolution 36 (1996) on the 4th Conference on Mediterranean Regions (Nicosia-Limassol, Cyprus, 20-22 September 1995), which insists that every endeavour be made so that the democratic principles in the European Charter of Local Self-Government are publicised and heeded in the southern Mediterranean countries too, in accordance with the recommendations set out in the conclusions of the Conference on North-South Local Democracy: the European Charter of Local Self-

Government in Action, held in Malta from 14 to 16 March 1996;

*d.* Congress Resolution 69 (1998) on decentralised co-operation and migration in the Mediterranean basin, which underlines the need for decentralised co-operation, at local and regional level, between the northern, southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean to promote local democracy and interregional partnership, particularly in the sphere of demography and migration problems;

*e.* Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1616 (2003) on the Council of Europe’s North-South Centre and its contribution to development co-operation in the twenty-first century; which highlights the essential role of Council of Europe’s European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity in Lisbon, commonly known as the North-South Centre, as a noble expression of Europe’s desire to assist the world’s poorer countries in their development, and to spread the Council of Europe’s universal values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law beyond the continent’s confines. Following the events of 11 September 2001, the centre’s unique mission of fostering European awareness of development issues and the root causes of world poverty, as well as the need for a genuine North-South dialogue on these issues, has taken on added urgency;

4. Having taken note of:

*a.* the Declaration on Intercultural Dialogue and Conflict Prevention adopted by the European Ministers responsible for Cultural Affairs in Opatija, Croatia, on 22 October 2003, which stresses the need for co-operation among all tiers of government – local, regional and national – and with civil society;

*b.* the Declaration on Intercultural Education in the New European Context adopted by the European Ministers of Education in Athens, Greece, on 12 November 2003;

5. Bearing in mind the relevant work of the Congress, in particular the revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life and the willingness of young people to foster solidarity in a true spirit of partnership between the North and the South;

6. Taking account of the work of the Directorate General of Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport (DGIV), and in particular of the “Intercultural Dialogue and Conflict Prevention” project Action Plan (2002-2004) and work in the youth sector to foster an intercultural awareness and a culture of peace and dialogue among young people;

7. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers give priority to the matter in the coming years and support the work of the various sectors of the Organisation that contribute to a constructive dialogue in this field, and in particular:

*a.* to endorse the proposals resulting from DGIV’s “Intercultural Dialogue and Conflict Prevention” project and, in particular, efforts to identify, in conjunction with the Congress, good practice at local, regional and national level;

*b.* to continue with the DGIV's work on history teaching, the revision of school textbooks and the training of teachers, not only in the field of intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, but furthermore to encourage the introduction into curricula of the global dimension and growing interdependence between the North and the South;

*c.* to support the dissemination of cultural and audiovisual works illustrating Europe's cultural and religious diversity, where our common roots are coming from, and to promote this knowledge and understanding as a common cultural heritage to be shared by all Europeans;

*d.* to use the media as a multiplier to make this diversity further known and accepted Europe-wide and beyond our continent;

*e.* to step up the work of the North-South Centre on combating exclusion, improving people's living conditions and promoting equal opportunities within the countries of the South;

8. Invites the Committee of Ministers:

*a.* to further develop the "quadripartite" structure of the North-South Centre, involving governments, parliaments, local and regional authorities and civil society organisations both in its statutory bodies and in its programmes and activities;

*b.* to support a decentralised approach, a better participation of the population concerned, in the conception and the implementation of development projects, via a direct involvement of local and regional authorities;

*c.* to devise, with the consent of the member states concerned and particularly active within the North-South

Centre, a special programme for the southern parts of Europe in order to set-up horizontal North-South solidarity networks based on greater mutual confidence;

*d.* to promote close and active co-operation between, on the one hand, the various sectors of the Organisation concerned and, on the other, the European Union in the context of the EU's plans to declare 2008 the Year of Intercultural Dialogue and Conflict Prevention, and widely publicise, on that occasion, all the Council of Europe's work designed to help promote such dialogue;

*e.* to support the Congress's efforts to help local and regional authorities identify and disseminate good practice in respect of promoting partnerships between the North and the South;

*f.* to disseminate the results of these good practices among member states, in order to enable cities and regions to evaluate existing activities and programmes and reshape them where necessary, so as to better use the limited resources available for the benefit of those cities and regions most in need of them;

*g.* to foster transfrontier co-operation, in particular in the area of culture and formal and non-formal education, in order to consolidate a more open attitude to other cultures, neighbourly relations and conflict prevention;

*h.* to invite those countries that have not already joined the North-South Centre to do so as soon as possible.

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1. Debated and adopted by the Standing Committee of the Congress on 16 March 2006 (see Document CG (12) 29, draft recommendation presented by H. Lund (Denmark, L, SOC), rapporteur).