

THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

Opinion 32 (2010)¹ Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1893 (2009) on the future of the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity

1. The Congress underlines that it has been involved in the work of the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity (“the Centre”) since it was set up in Lisbon in 1990 and that it signed a reinforced co-operation agreement with the Centre on 2 December 2008 in order to define common goals more effectively and expand mutual co-operation networks.

2. The Congress, which already co-operates with local and regional authorities in the Maghreb and the Middle East, welcomes the accession to the Centre of the first non-European state, Morocco, on 1 July 2009. It expresses satisfaction at the seminar on co-operation between the Council of Europe and Morocco held in Rabat on 22 and 23 February, in which it took part, and supports the planned follow-up action involving the Centre, the Council of Europe and the European Union, through which the Council of Europe could make a contribution to the process of democratic reforms under way in Morocco, with the political and financial support of the European Union.

3. It underlines the importance of closer ties between Europe, Africa and the southern shores of the Mediterranean, requiring dialogue between European and Arab towns and cities, to which the Congress wishes to continue contributing through its expertise and its work on the ground with local and regional players. In this context, the Congress is pleased that a second non-European state, Cape Verde, joined the Centre on 1 March.

4. The Congress also welcomes the co-operation by the European Union’s Committee of the Regions with the Centre, which it had called for. It supports the proposal made in Recommendation 1893 (2009) concerning joint participation by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe and the Committee of

the Regions of the European Union in the local and regional dimension of the Centre’s Executive Council, along the lines of the parliamentary dimension shared between the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the European Parliament.

5. The Congress believes that the management structure of the Centre, based on a “quadrilogue” of governments, parliamentarians, local and regional elected representatives and civil society, clearly adds value to its work and confers a natural legitimacy on the priorities set by the Centre in its activities.

6. It notes that, under Article 6.1 of the draft revised statute concerning membership of the Bureau, only one seat is assigned to a representative of local and regional authorities, to be shared between the Congress and the Committee of the Regions.

7. In this regard, the Congress underlines that it has always had a seat on the Bureau of the Executive Council and wishes to retain this permanent seat so as to remain a fully-fledged partner of the quadrilogue. It believes that an additional seat could be provided for a representative of the Committee of the Regions of the European Union.

8. The Congress also notes that Recommendation 1893 (2009) proposes that the Committee of Ministers consider transforming the Centre’s present status as an enlarged partial agreement into an enlarged agreement and amending Statutory Resolution (93) 51 to that end. It notes, however, that only 19 Council of Europe member states are currently members of the partial agreement. It hopes that the future accession of an increasing number of Council of Europe member states to the North-South Centre will enable the status to be changed to an enlarged agreement in future and calls on the governments concerned to act accordingly.

9. The Congress reiterates its full support for the Centre as it marks its 20th anniversary, and underlines its key role in promoting the Council of Europe’s values outside Europe. In the broader context of the reform process under way at the Council of Europe, it believes that the process of adopting a new statutory resolution for the Centre should lead to strengthening of its political role as a key instrument of the Council of Europe for dialogue and co-operation with non-European countries wishing to share our Organisation’s values.

1. Debated and adopted by the Standing Committee on behalf of the Congress on 18 June 2010 (see Document CG(18)20, presented by J.-C. Frécon, France (L, SOC), rapporteur).