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Recovery and reconstruction of Ukraine

Bureau of the Congress

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Draft declaration (for vote) 2

¹ L: Chamber of Local Authorities / R: Chamber of Regions.
EPP/CCE: European People's Party Group in the Congress.
SOC/G/PD: Group of Socialists, Greens and Progressive Democrats.
ILDG: Independent Liberal and Democratic Group.
ECR: European Conservatives and Reformists Group.
NR: Members not belonging to a political group of the Congress.

DRAFT DECLARATION

1. Referring to its Declaration 5 (2022) “The Russian Federation’s war against Ukraine”, Declaration 6 (2023) “The anniversary of Russia’s war against Ukraine”, Declaration 8 (2024) “The second anniversary of the Russian Federation’s war against Ukraine” and Declaration 9 (2024) “The destruction of cultural heritage in Ukraine”, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (“the Congress”) reiterates its condemnation, in the strongest terms, of the ongoing war of aggression being waged by the Russian Federation against Ukraine, in breach of international law and the Statute of the Council of Europe. At a time when geopolitical assumptions are being challenged and multilateralism is under threat, the Congress reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders.

2. The Congress deplores and condemns once again the fact that the Russian Federation’s unjustified and unprovoked war against Ukraine continues to cause massive losses of innocent lives and human suffering, as well as targeted destruction of cultural heritage and of vital infrastructures, which represent human rights violations unprecedented in recent history in Europe. Millions of people, the majority of whom are children, continue to be displaced from their homes. Furthermore, thousands of Ukrainians are still in captivity and subject to violence, inhuman treatment and torture.

3. The Congress further deplores the dramatic long-term repercussions that the war has had on territorial communities in Ukraine. It pays tribute to the crucial role that local and regional authorities in Ukraine have been playing in addressing the disastrous humanitarian consequences faced by their citizens, ensuring the functioning of public services and addressing emergency needs, and welcomes the cohesion and support that local and regional authorities have shown one another.

4. The Congress also welcomes the unreserved support expressed once again towards Ukraine and its people by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, and the latter’s determination to continue its efforts to ensure that the Russian Federation is held fully accountable for its aggression against Ukraine, as set out *inter alia* in the decisions adopted by the Ministers’ Deputies following their 1520th meeting on 24 and 26 February 2025.

5. The Congress emphasises once again its readiness to support local and regional authorities in Ukraine to contribute, within their competencies, to the work of the Register of Damages to ensure such accountability.

6. The Congress condemns the fact that the Russian Federation continues to subject Ukraine each day to bombardment and destruction, exacerbating the harm already caused and provoking new and immeasurable suffering and loss of life, as well as further damage to crucial infrastructures. It welcomes efforts towards a ceasefire, emphasising once again in this context the necessity of fully respecting the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders.

7. Three years after the launch by the Russian Federation of its full-scale aggression against Ukraine, the Congress underlines that Council of Europe member States must not wait for this aggression to end to engage in crucial work with Ukraine to lay the groundwork for its recovery and reconstruction at local and regional levels as well as at national level, and based on full respect for human rights.

8. The Congress considers that decentralised recovery and reconstruction in Ukraine should be based on a strategic vision and aspiration towards human-centred, inclusive, transparent and sustainable development, based on European standards and international best practices. Beyond essential work to repair infrastructure, recovery and reconstruction will require *inter alia* supporting veterans and war-affected populations, reintegrating returning IDPs and populations relocated abroad, and supporting other vulnerable groups, including through supporting the return of children illegally transferred by Russian occupiers. Local and regional authorities will have a crucial role to play in providing such support and in fostering equality and social cohesion. They will also be at the forefront in providing education, health services and public services, and in ensuring that their citizens have access to sustainable housing.

9. The Congress underlines that the process of decentralisation reform currently under way, on which the Congress is working closely with Ukrainian counterparts through its Centre of Expertise for Multilevel

Governance, will provide a critical foundation for recovery and reconstruction efforts, ensuring the strong institutions and empowered communities and citizens that are essential for a sustainable future.

10. The Congress reaffirms its readiness to support Ukraine in local self-government reforms and capacity-building and in the achievement of local democracy standards. It will continue to work closely with Ukrainian local and regional authorities and their national associations to address the needs voiced by them, and emphasises the importance of regular dialogue between the national authorities and all levels of subnational authorities in the context of decentralisation, recovery and reconstruction policies and their implementation.

11. Now more than ever, the Congress reaffirms its solidarity with the Ukrainian people and its commitment to a common, democratic future based on respect for international law and a just and lasting peace.