

THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

Resolution 361 (2013)¹ Regions and territories with special status in Europe

1. A number of Council of Europe member States have granted special status to specific regions as a means of addressing the specific identities and the common wish of their populations to have a greater say in the management of their own affairs.

2. The study, by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, of the functioning of such regions shows that they often have stronger and more effective regional democracy and can provide a model for other States to follow, providing that certain conditions are met, such as properly defined competences and well defined relations and working arrangements with the central authorities.

3. The persistence of regional conflicts within some member States suggests that there is further scope for the provision of specific constitutional arrangements for regions with strong identities. The Congress believes that special regional autonomy status can be an effective counterbalance to secessionist tendencies and that the peaceful and prosperous development of the European space will depend on making greater progress in internal conflict resolution. This will require the political will to pursue peaceful political

dialogue, to identify and negotiate suitable legal and constitutional solutions and to develop satisfactory models of decentralised democratic governance for the regions concerned.

4. Therefore the Congress resolves to:

a. work with the Committee of Ministers and the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) to identify indicators and characteristics of successful regions with special status and to develop effective models of this;

b. examine the attribution of legislative powers to specific regions as a factor in successful regional development;

c. assess the functioning of existing special region status arrangements in its country monitoring of the implementation of the European Charter of Local Self-Government (ETS No. 122);

d. pay particular attention in the framework of this monitoring, and in its political dialogue with the central governments of countries with internal regional problems, tensions or conflicts, to the potential of the “special status” model for achieving a negotiated settlement in those conflicts;

e. continue to give the democratic institutions of such regions representation in its Chamber of Regions;

f. regularly discuss developments and exchange good practice on this subject, in particular in its Chamber of Regions.

1. Debated and approved by the Chamber of Regions on 30 October 2013, and adopted by the Congress on 31 October 2013, 3rd Sitting (see Document CPR(25)2, explanatory memorandum); rapporteur: Bruno Marziano, Italy (R, SOC).