

## 47th SESSION

# Recurring issues based on assessments resulting from Congress monitoring of the European Charter of Local Self-Government and election observation missions (reference period 2021-2024)

Resolution 505 (2024)<sup>1</sup>

1. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (“the Congress”) refers to:
  - a. the European Charter of Local Self-Government (ETS No. 122) and its Additional Protocol on the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority (CETS No. 207);
  - b. The Reykjavík Declaration, adopted at the Fourth Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe (Reykjavík, 16 and 17 May 2023), highlighting the need to support the essential role of multilevel governance in delivering the Organisation’s vision, including through the role of the Congress with respect to the implementation of the European Charter of Local Self-Government;
  - c. Chapter XVIII, XIX and XX of the Rules and Procedures of the Congress, respectively on the organisation of monitoring procedures, election observation missions, implementation of the post-monitoring/post-electoral political dialogue;
  - d. the Congress monitoring reports and recommendations on the implementation of the European Charter of Local Self-Government in the Council of Europe member States;
  - e. the reports and recommendations adopted by the Congress further to the observation of local and regional elections as well as reports, resolutions and recommendations on transversal issues in electoral matters;
  - f. Congress Resolution 467 (2021) “Recurring Issues Based on Assessments Resulting from Congress Monitoring and Election Observation Missions (Reference Period 2017-2020)”;
  - g. Congress Resolution 466 (2021) “Ensuring the respect of the European Charter of Local Self-Government in major crisis situations”;
  - h. Congress Resolution 413 (2017) on the comparative analysis of the implementation of the European Charter of Local Self-Government in 47-member States;
  - i. Congress Resolution 412 (2017) “Recurring issues based on assessments resulting from Congress monitoring and election observation missions (reference period 2010-2016)”;

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<sup>1</sup> Debated and adopted by the Congress on 16 October 2024 (see document [CG\(2024\)47-20](#), explanatory memorandum), co-rapporteurs: Thibaut GUIGNARD, France (L, EPP/CCE) and Stewart DICKSON, United Kingdom (R, ILDG).

2. The Congress notes that since the issuance of the previous periodic report in 2021, Europe has undergone significant political, economic and social upheavals driven by the COVID-19 crisis, the reception of migrants and refugees, climate change, the Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine, and subsequent challenges related to the cost of living and energy prices. They have reshaped the environment in which national, local and regional governments operate, profoundly impacting their resources and activities.

3. The Congress regrets that the recurring issues of compliance with the Charter highlighted in the previous report have persisted during the current review period, while some of them have been exacerbated by the effects of successive crises. These include inadequate financial resources available to local and regional authorities, a restricted scope of local self-government, and insufficient consultation processes.

4. In addition, local and regional elected representatives throughout Europe have increasingly encountered virulent online hate speech and disinformation, as well as physical and verbal aggressions, creating a hostile environment for the execution of their mandates. This pattern, particularly evident during elections, has become more pronounced in recent years, exerting paralysing effects on European democracies and political life at the local and regional levels.

5. Similarly, on electoral matters, despite important efforts made by national authorities to ensure compliance with electoral standards, the Congress continues to highlight the relevance of the previously identified recurring issues regarding the inaccuracy of voters' lists, the misuse of administrative resources and official positions, the politicisation of the electoral administration, the low public confidence in electoral processes and the breaches to the principle of equal level playing field for all candidates.

6. At the same time, the Congress identified over the past few years emerging trends that increasingly impact local and regional elections, namely the deterioration of campaigning environments and the rise of foreign interference, while noting with satisfaction the overall progress made to improve the inclusivity of local and regional electoral processes in Europe.

7. Therefore, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe:

a. invites the Monitoring Committee to continue preparing a review of recurring issues approximately every three years, based on assessments from Congress monitoring and election observation missions conducted during that period;

b. entrusts the Monitoring Committee with the task of expanding and intensifying its activities in the field of local and regional elections, in particular on election observation missions, post-electoral dialogue and fact-finding missions;

c. invites country rapporteurs to continue focusing on recurring issues when monitoring the implementation of the Charter, conducting election observation missions, and performing mid-term reviews of the Charter's implementation;

d. urges all relevant Congress bodies to further integrate the recurring issues into their activities, develop effective tools and policies to assist member States in addressing these challenges, and promote the dissemination of relevant good practices.