

# THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

---

## Resolution 190 (2004)<sup>1</sup> on the challenges for regionalisation in South-east Europe

The Congress, bearing in mind the proposal of the Chamber of Regions,

1. Referring to its Resolution 83 (1999) on the current state of and prospects for regionalisation in Europe and Resolution 119 (2001) on international co-operation at regional level;

2. Bearing in mind the Chişinău political declaration on transfrontier and inter-territorial co-operation between states in South-eastern Europe, adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe at its 113th Session in November 2003;

3. Having examined the report by Carlo Andreotti (Italy, R, EPP/CD) on the challenges for regionalisation in South-east Europe;

4. Considering that there is a current trend towards greater regionalisation in many Council of Europe member states and that there are numerous encouraging developments regarding decentralisation in several countries;

5. Stressing the advantages of regionalisation, which is one of the most important means of addressing the political development challenges in Europe and which makes it possible to take greater account of the particular territorial features of each state and to respond more appropriately to the inhabitants' aspirations;

6. Considering that the regionalisation experience of European countries provides important examples, acting as an impetus for future administrative developments in South-east Europe;

7. Convinced that:

*a.* the promotion, establishment and strengthening of genuine regional democracy constitute one of the key factors in the political stabilisation process and are an essential pre-condition for the development of regions in South-east Europe;

*b.* the regional context is one of the most important in the democratic life of every country and that the regional level should be given sufficient responsibilities to enable it to fulfil the tasks with which it has been entrusted;

*c.* the setting up of regional structures offers the most appropriate basis for the decentralised allocation of financial resources;

*d.* South-east Europe needs above all efficient action to enable it to carry out the necessary territorial reforms, develop institutional capabilities and set up management structures which are most suited to the regional level;

8. Bearing in mind that regionalisation is a process designed to strengthen rather than weaken a country management;

9. Convinced that regionalisation implemented at the appropriate time and in consultation with the regions' inhabitants can be a political means of preventing social and cultural tension and indeed conflicts within states;

10. Believing that promoting autonomy and the process of territorial sub-division should foster coexistence between different ethnic groups within a region and country and improve inter-ethnic and inter-faith relations;

11. Convinced that:

*a.* the promotion of interregional and transfrontier co-operation is one of the fundamental requirements and essential objectives of European policy;

*b.* such co-operation is an important instrument in the stabilisation and development of South-east Europe and a means of strengthening the perception of links and interdependence between populations on both sides of a border;

12. Welcoming the initiatives to set up among the regions in the countries of South-east Europe structured and operational forms of transfrontier co-operation, such as Euroregions;

13. Referring to its recent work on regionalisation in member states, including South-east Europe;

14. Wishing to develop a social consensus in the countries of South-east Europe on political implementation of decentralisation in the organisation of the state;

15. Instructs the Chamber of Regions:

*a.* to continue to deploy the necessary effort to promote the decentralisation of powers and regionalisation in the countries of South-east Europe on the basis of its activities to assist the regions in their efforts to improve their status by means of a better application of the principle of subsidiarity;

*b.* to continue to hold technical colloquies on regionalisation in the countries of South-east Europe, bringing together experiences and information that can be used by the countries concerned in their search for appropriate decentralised and regionalised structures;

*c.* to contribute to the introduction of mechanisms and procedures which will enable the spreading in this part of Europe of regionalisation models, which are based on the draft European charter of regional self-government drawn up by the Congress;

*d.* to continue to promote and support the participation of civil society organisations and institutions in the process of

the decentralisation of powers and regionalisation, in order to bring about open and democratic institutional structures enabling citizens to take part in the political decisions which directly concern them;

16. Calls on all the regions of Europe:

*a.* to become involved to a greater extent in partnerships and multilateral co-operation structures with the new Council of Europe member states in central and eastern Europe, and particularly in South-east Europe, in the context of the activities organised by the Congress's Chamber of Regions with a view to transferring their experiences and of assisting the countries or regions which make a request for this type of assistance, also in the framework of the Local Democracy Agencies;

*b.* to take an active part in the co-operation programmes and partnerships set up under the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe;

17. Calls on the local authorities in all countries in Europe to support the activities and initiatives for promoting decentralisation and regionalisation in South-east Europe;

18. Calls on the regions of the countries of South-east Europe:

*a.* to take an active part in the co-operation programmes in order to benefit from the experiences and technical knowledge of other European countries in the field of regionalisation and to create stable regional democracy;

*b.* to monitor closely the public administration reforms at regional level in their respective countries and ensure that they are based on the principles of the devolution of powers and subsidiarity;

*c.* to manage their authorities responsibly and efficiently, bearing in mind citizens' expectations and employing competent staff trained at regional level;

*d.* to keep the Congress informed on national developments in the field of decentralisation and regionalisation as well as on progress concerning transfrontier and interregional co-operation.

---

1. Debated and approved by the Chamber of Regions on 4 November 2004 and adopted by the Standing Committee of the Congress on 5 November 2004, (see Document CPR (11) 6, draft resolution presented by C. Andreotti (Italy, R, EPP/CD) rapporteur).