

THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

Recommendation 238 (2008)¹ Resources and budget of the Congress for 2009

The Congress,

1. Convinced that:

a. local and regional democracy is the cornerstone of our societies, which we want to be inclusive and inspired by the respect for human rights, the rule of law and democracy;

b. local and regional authorities are at the heart of this ambition and are therefore called upon to participate directly in the construction of Europe;

c. the institutional representation of territorial authorities at the Council of Europe, the first European organisation, which, already fifty years ago, wished to include them in its mission, illustrates this role. The Congress has thereby become an important component of our Organisation and of the European institutional landscape;

d. the increased status of the representation of territorial representatives at the Council of Europe and the establishment of the Congress, has made this a unique assembly, with a bicameral structure, where local and regional representatives of the 47 member states dialogue and confer on questions of their competence;

e. a venue for debates and exchanges, but also the guardian of the principles of local autonomy enshrined in the European Charter of Local Self-Government, the Congress is an important added value to the action and unique mission of the Council of Europe, with an institutional status that recognises this situation by means of Resolution (2007) 6;

f. the Congress is of the opinion that its Secretary General should be able to benefit from the status of “specially appointed official”, in line with the Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly, so as to have a level which is commensurate with the status of the Congress within the Organisation;

g. the Congress takes note of, and appreciates, the concern to accord a high priority to the growing needs of the European Court of Human Rights, but regrets that this is done at the expense of other sectors of the Council of Europe, on which a decrease in the budget is imposed;

h. in this spirit, the Congress is deeply concerned about the consequences that the combined effects of the legitimate increase of certain costs, such as salaries and a sustained zero-growth budget, might have on the level of activity of the Congress, and therefore the impact of its mission;

i. the Congress also considers that it is important that it disposes of the necessary financial and human resources to allow it to play a proper role on the European stage and it is in this spirit that it has formulated requests for specific increases for the years to come in its priority activity sectors, in conformity with Article 16 of the Charter;

j. however, given the efforts requested from the different sectors of the Organisation so as to be able to present a budget for 2009 which is close to zero growth, the Congress accept reducing the requests that it originally formulated for 2009 but nevertheless maintains the requests concerning the organisation of a second annual plenary session and the European co-ordination of “Local Democracy Week”;

2. Consequently, in the light of the above, the Congress requests that the Committee of Ministers:

a. grant the status of “specially appointed official” to the Secretary General of the Congress, without any other supplementary posts;

b. grant an increase of €121 700 to the budget, equivalent to 1.99% in comparison with the exercise 2008, in order to be able to organise a second annual plenary session and co-ordinate the organisation and holding of a European Local Democracy Week (October 2009), bearing in mind that the additional cost for the second annual session is approximately €200 000 and €100 000 for the Local Democracy Week, with 59% of the required funding being found through internal savings within the Congress;

c. invite the Secretary General of the Council of Europe to include the needs formulated above in the budget proposal that he will present to the Committee of Ministers.

1. Debated and adopted by the Standing Committee of the Congress on 14 March 2008 (see Document CG(14)39REC, draft recommendation presented by G. Krug (Germany, R, SOC) on behalf of J.-C. Frécon (France, L, SOC), rapporteur).