

The SESSION

18-20 October 2017

CONTENTS

DECENTRALISED POLICIES FOR THE SUCCESSFUL INTEGRATION OF MIGRANTS

Timetable
of meetings

Dear members,

Agenda
of the session

I am pleased to welcome you to our second session of 2017. The theme of "decentralised policies for the successful integration of migrants" covers the two sessions of 2017. The Congress has devoted many activities to this issue, including the debates and reports adopted during its March session. In October, the Congress will once again address this question of paramount importance for the local and regional authorities of Europe, by hearing the first-hand accounts of several young refugees.

Election info

The monitoring of local and regional democracy, which is at the heart of the activities of the Congress, will be the subject of several debates during this session. You will also have the opportunity to exchange views with the Secretary General of the Council of Europe Thorbjørn Jagland and the representative of the current Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers, the Czech Deputy Minister of the Interior Petr Mlsna.

Reports
submitted

This session will also be an opportunity to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the European Week of Local Democracy and the 10th Anniversary of the Dosta/Congress Prize! that will be awarded to three European municipalities which carry out innovative projects for the inclusion of the Roma.

Communication

The guide for members was prepared by the Congress Secretariat to facilitate access to information and to provide answers to any questions you may have about the functioning and rules of the session. It includes useful information such as the timetable of meetings, the agendas of the plenary session and the chambers, the programme of side-events and receptions, the summaries of the reports and the description of the communication tools available for you.

Practical
info

I invite you to read and consult it for any questions that may arise during this week. The Congress Secretariat is also at your disposal to assist you in your work and to make this session as interesting and fruitful as possible.

Offices
and phones

I wish you an excellent working week and invite you to use all the tools, services and publications that the Congress Secretariat is constantly developing for the benefit of its members.

Notes



Side events

Andreas Kiefer

Secretary General of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities

TIMETABLE OF MEETINGS

TUESDAY 17 OCTOBER 2017 (eve of the session)

Bureau of the Chamber of Local Authorities

Room 6 - 9.00-10.00

Bureau of the Chamber of Regions

Room 10 - 9.00-10.00

Bureau of the Congress

Room 8 - 10.00-12.15, 13.45-15.30

Secretaries of delegations meeting

Room 8 - 15.45-16.30

coffee break 16.30-17.30

EPP/CCE Group

Room 9
15.30-17.30

Socialist Group

Room 7
15.30-17.30

ILDG Group

Room 10
15.30-17.30

ECR Group

Room 6
15.30-17.30

33rd SESSION

WEDNESDAY 18 OCTOBER 2017

Monitoring Committee

Room 1 - 8.45-10.45

Current Affairs Committee

Room 9 - 8.45-10.45

Governance Committee

Room 8 - 8.45-10.45

Plenary sitting

Hemicycle - 11.00-13.00

Lunch

Plenary sitting

Hemicycle - 14.30 - 19.00

THURSDAY 19 OCTOBER 2017

Chamber of Local Authorities

Hemicycle - 9.00-12.30

Chamber of Regions

Room 1 - 9.00-12.30

Lunch

Plenary sitting

Hemicycle - 14.00-19.30

FRIDAY 20 OCTOBER 2017

Bureau of the Congress

Room 8 - 8.30-9.15

Plenary sitting

Hemicycle - 9.30-12.00

AGENDA OF THE SESSION

CG33(2017)OJprov

Wednesday 18 October 2017

Plenary sitting - 11.00-13.00 - Hemicycle

* *Deadline for tabling amendments: 16.00 Tuesday 17 October*

Opening of the 33rd Session of the Congress by the President of the Congress

Gudrun MOSLER-TÖRNSTRÖM

Verification of new members' credentials and new official procedures for appointing national delegations to the Congress [CG33(2017)03] [CG33(2017)25]

Co-rapporteurs: Michail ANGELOPOULOS, Greece (L, EPP/CCE), and Eunice CAMPBELL-CLARK, United Kingdom (R, SOC)

Presentation by Michail ANGELOPOULOS



Debate and vote on the draft resolution [CG33(2017)02]*

Adoption of the draft agenda of the session

[CG33(2017)0J]

Adoption of the draft minutes of the last sitting of the 32nd Session (28 March 2017) [CG32(2017)PV03]

Adoption of the composition of Congress committees

[CG33(2017)04]

Communication by the President of the Congress

[CG33(2017)05]

Debate

Statement by Thorbjørn JAGLAND, Secretary General of the Council of Europe

Oral reply to questions from the floor

Suspension of the sitting

Meeting between the youth delegates and Congress members

13.30 – 14.15 - Room 11

Open to youth delegates, members of the Congress, secretaries of delegation and advisers

13.00 - EVENT: Inauguration of the exhibition on the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina and reception offered by the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, Serbia

Wednesday 18 October 2017

Plenary sitting - 14.30-19.00 - Hemicycle

CG33(2017)OJprov

* *Deadline for tabling amendments: 16.00 Tuesday 17 October*

Czech Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (19 May-November 2017)

Statement by Petr MLSNA, Deputy Minister for Legislation and Archiving, Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic, on behalf of the Chair of the Committee of Ministers

Oral reply to written questions [CG33(2017)10]

Deadline for tabling written questions: 16.00 Friday 13 October

Presentation of the youth delegates' 2017 grass-roots projects

Debate

Reception of unaccompanied refugee minors

Testimonies by:

- Maria
- Mustafe
- Abdulmalik

Debate

Local and regional democracy in Serbia

Presentation by the co-rapporteurs: Lucia KROON, Netherlands (L, EPP/CCE), and Sören SCHUMACHER, Germany (R, SOC)

Debate and vote on the draft recommendation [CG33(2017)19]*



Local and regional democracy in Italy

Presentation by the co-rapporteurs: Jakob WIENEN, Netherlands (L, EPP/CCE), and Stewart DICKSON, United Kingdom (R, ILDG)

Debate and vote on the draft recommendation [CG33(2017)17]*



End of the sitting

19.00 EVENT: Inauguration of the exhibition on the Czech regions and reception offered by the Union of Towns and Municipalities of the Czech Republic and Association of Regions of the Czech Republic

Thursday 19 October 2017 Chamber of Local Authorities - 9.00-12.30 Hemicycle

CPL33(2017)OJprov

* Deadline for tabling amendments: 10.00 Wednesday 18 October

Opening by the President of the chamber

Anders KNAPE

Adoption of the draft agenda of the chamber [CPL33(2017)OJprov]

Communication by the President of the chamber [CPL33(2017)01]

Observation of local elections in Finland (9 April 2017)



Presentation by the rapporteur: Lelia HUNZIKER, Switzerland (L, SOC)

Debate and vote on the draft recommendation [CPL33(2017)05]*

Fact-finding mission to Belgium



Presentation by the co-rapporteurs: Henrik HAMMAR, Sweden (L, EPP/CCE), and David ERAY, Switzerland (R, ILDG)

Debate and vote on the draft recommendation [CPL33(2017)02]*

Information report on the elections to the Council of Elders of Yerevan, Armenia (14 May 2017) [CPL33(2017)04]

Rapporteur: Liisa ANSALA, Finland (L, ILDG)

Presentation by Luc MARTENS, Belgium (L, EPP/CCE)

Debate

Round table – the situation in Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina [CPL33(2017)03]

Statements by:

Stewart DICKSON, United-Kingdom (R, ILDG), Congress rapporteur on the 20 October 2016 local elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Alex JEFFREY, Reader in Human Geography, University of Cambridge, United Kingdom

Vladimir CORIC, Executive Director, Youth Cultural Centre Abrašević, Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Dzenana DEDIC, Delegate, Local Democracy Agency of Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Vernes VOLODER, Project Manager, Nansen Dialogue Centre Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Debate

Dates of the next session

Close by the President of the chamber

12.30 - EVENT: Inauguration of the stand on the Leningrad Region and reception offered by the Leningrad Region, Russian Federation

Thursday 19 October 2017

Chamber of Regions - 9.00-12.30 - Room 1

CPR33(2017)OJprov

* Deadline for tabling amendments: 10.00 Wednesday 18 October

Opening by the President of the chamber

Gunn Marit HELGESEN

Adoption of the draft agenda of the chamber

[CPR33(2017)OJprov]

Communication by the President of the chamber

[CPR33(2017)01]

Regional co-operation and democracy in Europe : the role of European regional associations and organisations

Statements by:

Magnus BERNTSSON, President of the Assembly of European Regions (AER)

Stefan August LÜTGENAU, Director of Foster Europe, Foundation for Strong European Regions, Austria

Debate

Linguistic diversity in Europe

- *Council of Europe protecting linguistic heritage*

Statement by: Vesna CRNIC-GROTIC, Croatia, Chair of the Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

- *Regional and minority languages in Europe today*



Presentation by the co-rapporteurs: Lelia HUNZIKER, Switzerland (L, SOC), and Anna MAGYAR, Hungary (R, EPP/CCE)

Debate and vote on the draft resolution and draft recommendation [CPR33(2017)02]*

Women's participation in political life at regional level

Statements by:

Elena CENTEMERO, Chairperson of the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Simone SUSSKIND, Member of the Parliament of Brussels City Capital, President of the Association "Actions in the Mediterranean"

Debate

Dates of the next session

Close by the President of the chamber

12.30 - EVENT: Inauguration of the stand on the Leningrad Region and reception offered by the Leningrad Region, Russian Federation

Thursday 19 October 2017

Plenary sitting - 14.00-19.30 - Hemicycle

CG33(2017)OJprov

* Deadline for tabling amendments: 10.00 Wednesday 18 October

Adoption of the draft minutes of the sittings of the Congress on 18 October 2017 [CG33(2017)PV01am] [CG33(2017)PV01pm]

Situation of Dorin Chirtoaca, Mayor of Chişinău, Republic of Moldova

Presentation by the rapporteur: Gunn Marit HELGESEN, President of the Chamber of Regions

Debate and vote on the draft resolution [CG33(2017)23]*



10 years of the Dosta!/Congress Prize

Debate and award ceremony for the 6th Dosta!/Congress Prize followed by a statement by Claudia LUCIANI, Director of Democratic Governance, Culture and Diversity of the Council of Europe

The fight against corruption

Presentation by Herwig VAN STAA, Austria (R, EPP/CCE), Congress Spokesperson on Promoting Public Ethics and Preventing Corruption at the Local and Regional Levels

• The youth perspective

Statements by:

- Ania ANKOWSKA, co-founder of Anti-Corruption International
- 2 youth delegates

• Transparent public procurement

Presentation of the report on *Making public procurement transparent at local and regional levels* by the rapporteur: Amelie TARSCHYS INGRE, Sweden (L, ILDG)

Debate

Vote on the draft resolution and draft recommendation [CG33(2017)13]*



A better future for Europe's rural areas

Rapporteur: Philippe LEUBA, Switzerland (R, ILDG)

Presentation by Laurent WEHRLI, Switzerland (R, ILDG)

Statements by:

- Andrä RUPPRECHTER, Federal Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, Austria
- Vanik BERBERIAN, President of the French Association of Rural Mayors, France
- Aicha AIT HADDOU, President of the City Council of Azilal, Morocco

Debate and vote on the draft resolution and draft recommendation [CG33(2017)16]*



The situation of Catalonia in Spain

Debate

End of the sitting

19.30 - EVENT: Presentation of good examples of voluntary work of firefighters of Slovenia and reception offered by the Slovenian Delegation to the Congress

Friday 20 October 2017

Plenary sitting - 9.30-12.00 - Hemicycle

CG33(2017)OJprov

* Deadline for tabling amendments: 10.00 Thursday 19 October 2017

Formal adoption of texts approved by the chambers [CG33(2017)08]

Adoption of the draft minutes of the sessions of the chambers and of the sitting of the Congress on 19 October 2017 [CPL33(2017)PV], [CPR33(2017)PV] and [CG33(2017)PV02]

10 years of the European Local Democracy Week [CG33(2017)26]

- Showing of video celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Week
 - Statements by:
 - José Manuel PEREIRA RIBEIRO, Mayor of Valongo Municipality, Portugal
 - Mikhailo NETIAZHUK, Mayor of Fastiv, Ukraine
 - Presentation by Marc COOLS, Belgium (L, ILDG), on behalf of Gaye DOGANOGLU Turkey (L, EPP/CCE), Congress Spokesperson on the European Local Democracy Week
- Debate and vote on the draft resolution [CG33(2017)12]*



Local and regional democracy in Switzerland

Co-rapporteurs: Marc COOLS, Belgium (L, ILDG), and Dorin CHIRTOACA, Republic of Moldova (R, EPP/CCE)

Presentation by Marc COOLS

Debate and vote on the draft recommendation [CG33(2017)14]*



Close of the 33rd Session by the President of the Congress



ELECTION INFO

ELECTION OF THE 5th VICE-CHAIR OF THE MONITORING COMMITTEE

Date of the election:

Wednesday 18 October 2017

Candidatures:

Only full members of the Monitoring Committee may stand for election.

Submission of candidatures:

Candidatures must be notified in writing to the secretary of the committee:
stephanie.poirel@coe.int

with the following documents:

- ▶ a letter of candidature that indicates the candidate's name, country, chamber and political group (or non-affiliation) in the Congress, dated and signed (in English and/or French); and
- ▶ a curriculum vitae (CV) not exceeding 2 pages (in English and/or French)

Deadline for submission:

Candidatures must be submitted to the secretary of the committee at the latest at 18.00 on the day before the meeting at which the election is to take place, **that is by Tuesday 17 October 2017 at 18.00.**

Who has the right to vote?

Only full members of the committee and duly mandated replacement delegates may vote.



REPORTS SUBMITTED

PLENARY SITTINGS

Verification of new members' credentials and official procedures for appointing national delegations to the Congress [18.10.2017 - am]

Co-rapporteurs:

Michail ANGELOPOULOS, Greece (L, EPP/CE), and Eunice CAMPBELL-CLARK, United Kingdom (R, SOC)
CG33(2017)02 - Resolution

The rapporteurs will review the credentials of the new members and any new procedures for the appointment of national delegations in the light of the current criteria of the Congress Charter and Rules and Procedures.

Local and regional democracy in Serbia [18.10.2017 - pm]

Co-rapporteurs:

Lucia KROON, Netherlands (L, EPP/CCE), and Sören SCHUMACHER, Germany (R, SOC)
CG33(2017)19prov - Recommendation

This is the second report on local and regional democracy in Serbia since the country ratified the European Charter of Local Self-Government in 2007. The report notes that Serbia has responded positively to most of the previous recommendations made by the Congress in 2011, in particular by ratifying the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities and by signing the Additional Protocol to the European Charter of Local Self-Government on the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority. In addition, a number of important legislative steps have been taken in order to modernise and strengthen local self-government, notably the adoption of the law dealing with the status of local government staff. The rapporteurs underline the importance of further implementing the Public Administration Reform Strategy and encourage the Serbian authorities to continue their efforts aimed at fighting corruption, including at local level.

The rapporteurs draw the authorities' attention to the temporary ban on recruitment, the possibility of dismissal of local government assemblies and the lack of transparent criteria for allocating State grants and resources from the reserve fund. The Congress recommends that the Serbian authorities provide adequate resources for local government to carry out its functions and maintain full responsibility for healthcare and education at the local level. Finally, it also urges Serbia to clarify and improve the financial situation of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina.



Local and regional democracy in Italy [18.10.2017 - pm]

Co-rapporteurs:

Jakob WIENEN, Netherlands (L, EPP/CCE), and Stewart DICKSON, United Kingdom (R, ILDG)
CG33(2017)17prov - Recommendation

This report was prepared following the third monitoring visit to Italy since the country ratified the European Charter of Local Self-Government in 1999. The report notes with satisfaction that the principle of self-government is soundly anchored in the State organisation by the domestic constitution. It also approves the efforts undertaken by the country to foster decentralisation. Nevertheless, the rapporteurs express their concern with regard to the general lack of financial resources available to local authorities, notably provinces, and the absence of effective consultations on financial matters that concern them directly. The report highlights the fact that local authorities do not dispose in practice of enough qualified personnel. Furthermore, the representatives of the provinces and the metropolitan cities are not elected by direct and universal suffrage and do not receive appropriate financial compensation in order to perform their responsibilities. Lastly, there exists a discrepancy between financial resources of regions having a special status in comparison with those having an ordinary status.

The Congress urges the Italian authorities to reconsider, during consultations, the calculation of the budget cuts and to lift financial constraints imposed on local authorities to ensure sufficient financial resources are available to them. It recommends clarifying the competences of the provinces and metropolitan cities, by re-introducing direct elections of their governing bodies, providing for adequate financial remuneration of their representatives and revising the current limitations in relation to local human resources. Finally, the Congress recommends that the Italian authorities ensure a greater fiscal autonomy to the regions having an ordinary status.

Local democracy in the Republic of Moldova: clarification of the conditions surrounding the suspension of the Mayor of Chişinău [19.10.2017 - pm]

Rapporteur: Gunn Marit HELGESEN, President of the Chamber of Regions
CG33(2017)23prov - Resolution

This document reports the conclusions of the rapporteur, Gunn Marit Helgesen, with regard to her visit to Chişinău at the request of the Bureau of the Congress. The rapporteur notes with concern that the conditions in which the mayor of the capital of the Republic of Moldova has been suspended are problematic in terms of Articles 3.2, 7.1 and 8.3 of the European Charter of Local Self-Government. She has proposed a draft resolution instructing the Congress to arrange a fact-finding mission, which will result in a recommendation to the Moldovan authorities, asking the Venice Commission to give its opinion on the constitutionality of the local recall referendum, which, in the rapporteur's opinion, entails a breach of Article 7.1 of the Charter, and requesting that the information in the present report be forwarded to the Monitoring Committee so that the latter may take it into account in the monitoring of local and regional democracy in the Republic of Moldova planned for 2018, particularly in the light of the complaint sent to the Congress in the meantime by the Congress of Local Authorities of Moldova (CALM), which reports pressure being brought to bear on local elected representatives through recurrent court proceedings against them.

Making public procurement transparent at local and regional levels [19.10.2017 - pm]

Rapporteur: Amelie TARSHYS INGRE, Sweden (L, ILDG)

CG33(2017)13prov - Resolution, Recommendation

As public procurement involves a large proportion of public expenditure and, to an increasing extent, the transfer of public resources to the private sector or to non-profit organisations, it is particularly vulnerable to various types of corruption. This report examines the systemic problems in local and regional government procurement which create corruption risks, such as weak contracting expertise, the “revolving door” phenomenon, or lack of transparency, and suggests practical steps that local and regional authorities can take to reduce their exposure to such corruption.

In its resolution, the Congress invites local and regional authorities to assess the different corruption risks involved in procurement and set up internal controls and evaluation mechanisms. It calls upon them to enhance transparency by publishing data and procurement details at all stages of the process, in order to encourage public scrutiny and involve civil society.

In its recommendation, it also asks the Committee of Ministers to encourage governments and parliaments of member States to establish national public procurement standards and to introduce e-procurement systems to minimise the amount of human discretion involved.

A better future for Europe’s rural areas [19.10.2017 - pm]

Rapporteur: Philippe LEUBA, Switzerland (R, ILDG)

CG33(2017)16prov - Resolution, Recommendation

Rural areas across Council of Europe member States are characterised by their social, economic, and environmental diversity. Some rural areas represent the most prosperous and well performing areas in their countries, while others are experiencing depopulation, demographic ageing, high levels of poverty and land abandonment. These disparities have become more marked since the 2008 financial crisis.

This report discusses the key opportunities and challenges facing Europe’s rural areas, such as territorial cohesion, social sustainability, employment opportunities, and infrastructure development.

In its resolution, the Congress invites local and regional authorities in rural areas to raise public and policy makers’ awareness on the diversity of rural areas, their potential and assets and their importance as part of Europe’s heritage. It calls upon them to devise local rural strategies in partnership with all development actors; to set minimum service standards in order to guarantee continuity in the provision of essential services; to improve education and training; and to support entrepreneurship and innovation in order to diversify the local economy. In its recommendation, it asks the Committee of Ministers to call upon governments to devise new rural development policies, which are both adapted to the specific features of rural areas and grounded in a territorial and multi-sectoral investment approach, and to promote greater equity and well-being in these areas.

10 years of the European Local Democracy Week [20.10.2017 - am]

Congress Spokesperson on the European Local Democracy Week: Gaye DOGANOGLU, Turkey
(L, EPP/CCE)
CG33(2017)12prov - Resolution

In the draft resolution, prepared on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the European Local Democracy Week, the Congress renews its commitment to further develop this pan-European initiative for the benefit of local and regional authorities and the citizens across Europe.

The draft resolution also envisages the creation of a Reflection Group that will work on taking the Week forward to a new dimension

Local and regional democracy in Switzerland [20.10.2017 - am]

Co-rapporteurs:
Marc COOLS, Belgium (L, ILDG) and Dorin CHIRTOACA, Republic of Moldova (R, EPP/CCE)
CG33(2017)14prov - Recommendation

This particularly positive report is based on the second monitoring visit to Switzerland since the country ratified the European Charter of Local Self-Government in 2005. It shows that municipal self-government is particularly deeply rooted in Switzerland. All municipalities possess a wide range of powers and responsibilities and substantial rights of self-government. The financial situation of Swiss municipalities appears generally healthy, with a relatively low debt ratio. Direct-democracy procedures are highly developed at all levels of governance. Furthermore, the rapporteurs very much welcome the Swiss parliament's decision to authorise the ratification of the Additional Protocol to the European Charter of Local Self-Government on the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority.

The report draws attention to the need for improved direct involvement of municipalities, especially the large cities, in decision-making procedures and with regard to the question of the sustainability of resources in connection with the needs of municipalities to enable them to discharge their growing responsibilities. Finally, it highlights the importance of determining, through legislation, a framework and arrangements regarding financing for the city of Bern, taking due account of its specific situation.

The Congress encourages the authorities to guarantee that the administrative bodies belonging to intermunicipal structures are made up of a minimum percentage of directly elected representatives so as to safeguard their democratic nature. The rapporteurs also recommend that the Swiss authorities, in consultation with the cantons, provide for the possibility of extending the scope of the Charter to the cantons. Finally, the Congress calls on the authorities to ratify Articles 4.4, 6.2, 8.2 and 9.5 of the Charter, which are complied with de facto in Switzerland.

CHAMBER OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Observation of local elections in Finland (9 April 2017) [19.10.2017 - am]

Rapporteur: Lelia HUNZIKER, Switzerland (L, SOC)

CPL33(2017)05prov - Recommendation

Upon official invitation from the Ministries of Justice and Employment and Local Government and Public Reforms of Finland, dated 8 August 2016, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities deployed a 23-member delegation to observe the local elections held in the country on 9 April 2017.

Against the backdrop of a comprehensive administrative reform, the observation of the local vote allowed the Congress delegation to gain insight into important changes underway at the territorial level. Technically speaking, with the exception of some minor issues, the 2017 local elections were organised in a very professional manner and characterised by a high level of public trust in the electoral processes and the administration. Transparency, a well-established voters' registration system and the possibility of advance voting are positive features of local elections in Finland. Issues to be considered to achieve further democratic progress include the modalities of nomination for independent candidates, the introduction of mandatory training for members of the election administration, the promotion of participation of non-Finns as voters and candidates at local level as well as the question of elected Mayors instead of the existing open application system, in order to strengthen the political role of Mayors, notably in larger urban zones.

In the context of the mentioned regional administrative reform, the Congress invites the Finnish authorities to implement genuine decentralisation at regional level, in particular with regard to financial autonomy and competences conferred on the future elected Regional Councils. Moreover, the Congress encourages the authorities to schedule the first regional elections to be held in 2018 on a different day than the Presidential elections, in order that regional voting will not be overshadowed by general political topics.

The functioning of the organs of local democracy in a context of linguistic diversity in the communes "with facilities" around Brussels in the Flemish region [19.10.2017 - am]

Co-rapporteurs:

Henrik HAMMAR, Sweden (L, EPP/CCE), and David ERAY, Switzerland (R, ILDG)

CPL33(2017)02prov - Recommendation

The report was prepared following a fact-finding visit that took place on 2 and 3 February 2017 to Brussels (Belgium) with a view to clarifying the functioning of local democracy structures in a context of linguistic diversity in the communes "with facilities" around Brussels in the Flemish region.

The report highlights the non-implementation of previous Congress Recommendations 131(2003), 258(2008) and 366(2014) as regards the issue of the appointment system for mayors. It stresses that the election of the burgomaster, directly elected by the citizens, continues to have to be endorsed by the Flemish Minister of the Interior. As a result, the fact-finding visit of 2017 shows that since the latest examination of the situation in 2008, it has not improved.

The report points out that an undue limitation of the capacity of French speaking local councillors in the communes "with facilities" around Brussels in the Flemish region to use French in carrying out local councillors' activities is an infringement on their exercise of local democracy.

Consequently, the Congress recommends that the Belgian authorities revoke the system of appointment of mayors by the Flemish Minister of the Interior. It also calls on the national authorities to review the way in which the language laws are applied in municipalities with so-called special language arrangements, in order to allow the use of both French and Dutch by local elected representatives when fulfilling their local mandates.

Information report on the elections to the Council of Elders of the City of Yerevan, Armenia (14 May 2017) [19.10.2017 - am]

Rapporteur: Liisa ANSALA, Finland (L, ILDG)
CPL33(2017)04 - Information document

Further to an invitation by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, the Congress deployed an Electoral Assessment Mission to monitor the elections to the Council of Elders of the City of Yerevan held on 14 May 2017. The elections in Yerevan were the first local elections to be organised under the 2016 Electoral Code.

Apart from some individual irregularities, the Congress delegation assessed the elections as technically well prepared, overall in line with international standards, and carried out in a calm and orderly manner. However, there are recurring issues of concern to Congress observers, in particular the quality of voters' lists and the fact that these lists include a large number of voters who are residing de facto abroad. In order to strengthen citizens' trust in the electoral process which is surrounded by a general atmosphere of scepticism and electoral fatigue, the authorities should pay more attention to allegations of vote buying and misuse of administrative resources. Moreover, the accessibility of polling stations for persons with disabilities and elderly people needs to be addressed.

In addition, the organisation of local elections only a month after the 2 April 2017 Parliamentary elections didn't ensure transparency and public interest in grassroots' elections. The Congress would thus welcome measures towards establishing one unified Election Day for the local level, which should also be organised within a reasonable timeframe from the Parliamentary elections.

CHAMBER OF REGIONS

Regional and minority languages in Europe today [19.10.2017 - am]

Co-rapporteurs:

Lelia HUNZIKER, Switzerland (L, SOC), and Anna MAGYAR, Hungary (R, EPP/CCE)

CPR33(2017)02prov - Resolution, Recommendation

The report takes stock of the situation as regards the implementation of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages on the occasion of the 25th anniversary since its opening to signature and in light of new developments in our societies, including digitalisation. It underlines that local and regional authorities should be guided by the principle that diversity is an enriching element of society and that the protection of historical regional or minority languages constitutes the firmest protection of said diversity, with a positive outcome from both an economic and cultural perspective. It invites them to take measures, where and when possible, to consolidate and develop regional or minority language teaching and education in these languages in their regions.

The report also draws the attention of member States to the fact that in many countries austerity measures have resulted in cutbacks in education and in services provided to minority language speakers. It calls on member States to refrain from bringing the weight of austerity measures to bear on language policies. Noting that, regrettably, only 25 States have ratified the Charter and 8 have signed it, without ratification, it invites the remaining 14 member States to sign and ratify the Charter.

COMMUNICATION

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PRACTICAL INFO



Congress badges

All holders of a Congress photo badge are requested to have a new ID photo taken at the Accreditation Unit during the session. This photo will be used for the new Congress badges which will be issued during this session. The Accreditation Unit is situated in the main hall of the Palais on the ground floor.

Opening hours of the Accreditation Unit are:

Tuesday 17 October: 7.45-12.00 and 14.00-17.30

Wednesday 18, Thursday 19 and Friday 20 October : 7.30-17.30

Holders of partner status and invited guests will receive a badge without photo for the duration of the session.

The doors are operated by placing the badge on the reader (photo badge) or by swiping the badge (non-photo badge). The badge with photo will allow access to the European Parliament (EP). The footbridge between the EP and the Council of Europe will be open between 11.30 and 14.00, Monday to Friday.

Congress Laissez-passer

Congress Laissez-passer are issued by Protocol. The form for requesting a Laissez-passer is available at the Table Office (Office 1081 - 1st floor).

Attendance registers

Attendance registers are placed at the two central entrances to the hemicycle and in front of Room 1, half an hour before the opening of the debates. For the plenary session, the attendance list is drawn up alphabetically. Each representative must sign beside his/her name. Please note: a substitute duly mandated to replace a representative must sign next to the name of the representative. During the session of the chambers, each member must sign beside his/her name. Youth delegates must also sign a register.

Session documents

Session documents are available at the document distribution centre to the right of the hemicycle. For the session of the Chamber of Regions being held in Room 1, the documents are available in front of the room.

Tabling a proposal

Delegates wishing to table a proposal may do so in type-written form in English or French and must hand it in to the Table Office (Office 1081 - 1st floor). Proposals judged in order shall be published and referred to the Bureau for consideration (Rule 27 of the Rules and Procedures). Conditions of admissibility: The proposals should be tabled by at least 20 delegates from at least 4 national delegations, by 20 youth delegates or by a political group on any matter within the competence of the Congress.

Tabling a memorandum

Delegates wishing to propose a memorandum may do so in type-written form in English or French and must hand it in to the Table Office (Office 1081 – 1st floor). They must not exceed 200 words, must be signed by at least 20 delegates belonging to at least 4 national delegations or by 20 youth delegates and must be on subjects within the competence of the Congress. Memoranda judged by the President of the Congress to be in order shall be published (Rule 28).

Tabling an amendment or sub-amendment

Delegates wishing to table an amendment or sub-amendment must complete the form available in the document distribution centre and in front of Room 1. This form, duly signed, must be handed in to the Table Office (Office 1081 - 1st floor). Please see the form or the agenda for the deadlines to be respected. Conditions of admissibility: Amendments must be tabled by at least 5 delegates from at least 2 delegations. They may be tabled in any of the Congress' official or working languages. Sub-amendments apply **only** to previously tabled amendments.

Taking the floor during a debate

Each delegate (representative, duly mandated substitute, Congress partner or youth delegate), may take the floor during a debate. The form for registration of speakers is available in the front of the hemicycle or at the entrance of Room 1. This form must be handed in to the Secretariat staff seated by the rostrum. Speaking times are listed on the form and on the daily notice.

Putting a question to a guest speaker

The agenda of the session indicates the list of guest speakers and whether they will respond to written or spontaneous questions. It also gives the deadlines for tabling written questions. All written questions should be written in English or French and handed in to the Table Office (Office 1081 - 1st floor - email: congress.session@coe.int) by the deadline.

Voting system in the hemicycle



Members' badges will be used for electronic voting in the hemicycle (Congress and Chamber of Local Authorities)

Plan of action for threat levels

The Council of Europe's Safety and Security Service has put in place a system of threat levels similar to those applied by other international organisations. The objective is to adapt the vigilance and protection levels to evolving threats and vulnerabilities in order to enable a prompt and co-ordinated reaction.

Specific protection and vigilance measures correspond to the four levels of threat that have been put in place:

White : normal

Yellow : reinforced

Orange : high

Red : very high.

Access to the public gallery

The access to the public gallery is located opposite the cloakroom on the ground floor of the Palais de l'Europe.

Financial Office

The provisional Finance Office is located on the 1st floor, Office 1040.

The opening times are:

Tuesday 17 October: 15.00-17.00

Wednesday 18 and Thursday 19 October: 8.30-12.30 / 14.00-17.00

Friday 20 October: 8.00-13.00

Parliamentarian's Bar

The Parliamentarian's Bar will be open from 8.00 to 18.00 on Wednesday 18 and Thursday 19 October and from 8.00 to 13.00 on Friday 20 October

Leaving the building after 20.00

The doors in the main hall of the Palais de l'Europe are closed at 20.00 (or after a specific event). After 20.00 it is possible to exit via level -1 [minus 1] by using lift V.



OFFICES AND PHONES

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Gudrun MOSLER-TÖRNSTRÖM, President of the Congress	1.037	4684
Secretariat : Clara CONTI-TEIXEIRA	1.039	5493
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Andreas KIEFER, Secretary General of the Congress	1.041	2248
Secretariat : Ermioni KEFALLONITOU	1.039	2205
DIRECTOR		
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Secretariat : Nina TSIKLAOURI	1.030	5018
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Imogen HATTENVILLE	1.081	4158
Nata CHIKOVANI	1.081	3254
Keltoum BELAID	1.074	5482
Léa PALAU	1.076	3633
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Linette TAESCH, Co-secretary of the Bureau	1.078	3105
Secretariat : Anne-Marie KLEIN	1.076	4450
Léa PALAU	1.076	3633
<i>Sessions - Participation of youth delegates</i>		
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<i>Website - Media - Publications - Communication</i>		
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Marie-Noëlle REBOUL	6.049/51	2240
Arwen THIERRY	6.049/51	2292
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Mira MASTRONARDI-KORSOS	1.040	5695
Florian WOLF	1.040	6372

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Svitlana PEREVERTEN	6.063B	6427
Secretariat : Gordana TETCHNER	1.063/65	5166
François SIFFERLÉ	1.063/65	3315
Anita QUATRINI	1.063/65	4457
Ekaterina KOTNOVA	6056A	5244
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Marianne BENDERRA	6.063	4429
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Current Affairs Committee		
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Svetislav PAUNOVIC	6.028	4105
Jane DUTTON EARLY	6.018	2360
Karine MOREAU	6.030	4544
Olwen BYRNE	6.016	4722
Albert FLORES-HERRERA	6.017	4159
Secretariat : Anna ONIPENKO	1.036	3175
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Orsolya GANCSOS	6.016	3223
Laura ESSELIN	6.017	4258
Secretariat : Julia BARATH	1.030	5617
European Local Democracy Week		
Dmitri MARCHENKOV	6.019	3844
Orsolya GANCSOS	6.016	3223
Secretariat : Julia BARATH	1.030	5617
External Relations and Thematic Priorities		
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Giampaolo CORDIALE	1.034	3102
Orsolya GANCSOS	6.016	3223
Laura ESSELIN	6.017	4258
Roma and Travellers Team		
Manuel SORIAT	A4 47C	6394

Notes

Notes

SIDE EVENTS

INAUGURATIONS and RECEPTIONS

Wednesday 18 October 2017

13.00 - Inauguration of the exhibition on the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina and reception offered by the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, Serbia - Lobby of the hemicycle

19.00 - Inauguration of the exhibition on the Czech regions and reception offered by the Union of Towns and Municipalities of the Czech Republic and Association of Regions of the Czech Republic - Entrance hall

Thursday 19 October 2017

12.30 - Inauguration of the stand on the Leningrad Region and reception offered by the Leningrad Region, Russian Federation - Lobby of the hemicycle

19.30 - Presentation of good examples of voluntary work of firefighters of Slovenia and reception offered by the Slovenian Delegation to the Congress - Lobby of the hemicycle

EXHIBITIONS and INFORMATION STANDS

- Exhibition on Czech regions in the framework of the Czech Republic Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe
- Exhibition "Vojvodina flowing on into the future", Serbia
- Presentation of the Leningrad Region, Russian Federation
- Information stand on the Partnership for Good Governance (PGG)
- Information stand on the voluntary firefighters in Slovenia
- Information stand on social and cultural projects of Büyükçekmece (Turkey) for Roma citizens
- Exhibition on best practices and achievements of the local self-government reform in Ukraine
- Information stand on the International Diabetes Federation (IDF)
- Information stand on the European Youth Capital (EYC)
- Information stand on the Minority SafePack – diversity in Europe
- Congress's activities
- Congress MediaBox, interview platform
- European Local Democracy Week
- European Alliance of Cities and Regions for Roma Inclusion

