

THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

Recommendation 193 (2006)¹ on the 6th Forum of Cities and Regions of South-East Europe (Sinaia, Romania, 8-9 December 2005)

1. The Congress, in the context of its current and former activities to develop local democracy, transfrontier co-operation between local and regional authorities, and partnerships with cities and regions in South-Eastern Europe, thanks:

a. the City of Sinaia, the Prahova County Council and the Romanian Authorities chairing the Committee of Ministers for their warm welcome on the occasion of the 6th Forum of Cities and Regions of South-East Europe (12th Economic Forum), which took place in Sinaia on 8 and 9 December 2005;

b. the Franco-Belgian company Dexia for its participation and support;

c. the Representative of the Parliamentary Assembly and organisations holding observer status with the Congress for their active participation in the forum.

2. Regarding the political situation in South-Eastern Europe and its consequences for local and regional authorities, the Congress:

a. reaffirms the essential role that local and regional authorities can play in the promotion of democracy and political stability in South-Eastern Europe;

b. welcomes the positive legislative developments in local self-government in various countries of South-Eastern Europe which contribute to the political stability of the area;

c. hopes that the recent discussions held in Vienna in the framework of the United Nations concerning local government in Kosovo will lead to a satisfactory solution, enabling all the communities to take part in local life in Kosovo in the spirit of the European Charter of Local Self-Government and the European Convention on Human Rights.

3. The Congress recommends that the governments of the countries of South-Eastern Europe:

a. adopt and implement work programmes for better local government in accordance with the conclusions adopted by the European Ministers responsible for Local and Regional Government at their Conference on Effective Democratic Governance at Local and Regional Level (Zagreb, October 2004) and, accordingly,

b. foster dialogue between central government and local authorities, and between associations of local and regional authorities and the national authorities;

c. set up task forces to co-ordinate and assess the implementation of national programmes in each country;

d. give their support to the Adriatic Euroregion, launched on the initiative of the Congress, at the Venice Conference on 6 February 2006, with a view to ensuring that it has the necessary material and financial resources to develop its programme of activities;

e. give their support to the Black Sea euroregion project, launched on the initiative of the Congress, at the Constanta Conference on 30 March 2006 with a view to developing co-operation between local, regional and national authorities of the area and international organisations.

f. give their support to the project to set up a centre for interregional and transfrontier co-operation in the framework of a Partial Agreement of the Council of Europe, to be located in St Petersburg.

g. take the necessary steps to give local and regional authorities the powers they need to ensure that the European Code of Conduct for Local and Regional Elected Representatives, adopted by the Congress in 1999, is implemented;

h. give their support to the draft European convention containing uniform law on transfrontier groupings of territorial co-operation currently in preparation in the Council of Europe as a concrete measure facilitating the establishment of euroregions;

4. The Congress asks the donor governments, donor organisations and the European Commission to:

a. support specific projects aimed at strengthening local and regional democracy and transfrontier co-operation in South-Eastern Europe;

b. carefully examine and give their financial backing to projects for South-Eastern Europe presented by the Congress, in particular those concerning the development of the Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South East Europe (NALAS), the Local Democracy Agencies (LDAs) and the organisation of a future Forum of Cities and Regions of South-Eastern Europe;

c. support the various initiatives fostering transfrontier co-operation between local and regional authorities in South-Eastern Europe, in particular by developing fully-functioning euroregions.

5. The Congress invites the non-governmental organisations² involved in co-operation between local and regional authorities in South-Eastern Europe to:

a. promote partnerships and specific projects with the cities and regions of South-Eastern Europe (with the support of

specific funding programmes under European Union projects);

b. contribute to the co-operation activities launched by the Congress (in particular, the projects of the Local Democracy Agencies (LDAs), the Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South East Europe (NALAS), the Adriatic and Black Sea euroregions).

6. The Congress recommends that the Committee of Ministers, on the basis of the conclusions of the 6th Forum of Cities and Regions of South-East Europe (Sinaia, 8-9 December 2005):

a. carefully consider the projects to be financed by voluntary contributions submitted by the Congress aimed at fostering local and regional democracy in South-Eastern Europe and particularly those concerning the development of the Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South East Europe (NALAS), the Association of Local Democracy Agencies (ALDA) and the European Network of Training Organizations (ENTO) training programmes;

b. invite member states of South-Eastern Europe to sign and ratify the European Convention on the Promotion of Transnational Long-Term Voluntary Service for Young People (ETS No. 175)

c. give favourable consideration to the draft European convention containing uniform law on transfrontier groupings of territorial co-operation which is being prepared by the Steering Committee on Local and Regional Democracy (CDLR).

7. The Congress invites the European Commission to:

a. strengthen the role played by local and regional authorities in helping to consolidate democracy in the western Balkans, in particular in its programmes in South-Eastern Europe, especially the new Neighbourhood Policy and give particular impetus to programmes developing exchanges of young people of South-Eastern Europe;

b. take due account of the projects submitted by the Congress with a view to developing local and regional democracy and transfrontier co-operation in South-Eastern Europe;

c. give its financial backing to the projects submitted by the NALAS and the Association of Local Democracy Agencies (ALDA);

d. encourage a specific programme promoting transfrontier co-operation in the Balkan and Black Sea areas in synergy with the European Union Regional Policy and Neighbourhood Policy;

e. take due account of the current Council of Europe work on a draft European convention containing uniform law on transfrontier groupings of territorial co-operation when reviewing the proposal for a regulation establishing a European grouping of territorial co-operation (EGTC).

1. Debated and adopted by the Congress on 1 June 2006, 3rd Sitting (see Document CG (13) 11, draft recommendation presented by Ludmila Sfirloaga (Romania, R, SOC), rapporteur).

2. In particular the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), the Assembly of European Regions (AER) and the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR).