

# CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES OF EUROPE

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## **Resolution 159 (2003)<sup>1</sup> on tackling terrorism – the role and responsibilities of local authorities**

The Congress, bearing in mind the proposal of the Chamber of Local Authorities,

1. Expresses its satisfaction at the successful organisation by the CLRAE of the Conference on “Tackling terrorism – the role and responsibilities of local authorities”, held in Luxembourg, on 20 and 21 September 2002, during the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg’s presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe;
2. Notes that the conference was attended by 250 participants from twenty-seven countries;
3. Wishes to acknowledge the full support, in the organisation and conduct of the Conference, of the Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Union of Luxembourg Towns and Municipalities (Syvicol);
4. Recalling that the general theme on “Tackling terrorism – the role and responsibilities of local authorities”, was subdivided into four further specific themes, namely:
  - a. local authorities, organised crime and terrorism;
  - b. protection of industrial plants and public places;
  - c. the role of local authorities in promoting dialogue between cultures, ethnic groups and religions;
  - d. civil defence and crisis management;all of which were illustrated by case studies from a wide range of the forty-four member countries of the Council of Europe;
5. Wishes to thank the Luxembourg authorities and the CLRAE for having designed and organised the conference;
6. Reiterates its horror at the loss of life caused by the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, and its belief that terrorist threats are now a global problem requiring concerted and determined international action and responses;
7. Considers that local and regional authorities, alongside national governments and international organisations and agencies, have a clear responsibility to protect their citizens against terrorist attacks and threats to a democratic way of life;
8. Deplores the high number of victims of terrorist crime in recent years, and the fact that local authorities in Europe

have been faced with atrocities such as attacks on – and even the murder of – local councillors;

9. Convinced that terrorism as a mechanism for change has not always been as universally condemned in Europe as it should have been;
10. Convinced that while terrorism did not begin on 11 September 2001, it is now more dangerous and unpredictable than beforehand, bringing in its wake the threat of disorder and instability;
11. Draws attention, in a wider setting, to the changes in the pattern and type of crime arising from political and economic change in Europe – the smuggling of people, arms and raw materials, the organisation of clandestine immigration, an extensive and pervasive drug trade and political corruption – all of which may be considered as a breeding ground for acts of violence and terror;
12. Recalls the series of annual conferences organised by the CLRAE on different aspects of local authorities’ work in preventing and dealing with crime, the results of which have now been drawn together into the Council of Europe publication *Urban Crime Prevention – A guide for local authorities*, and notes that the next conference on this subject will be held in Prague from 13 to 15 November 2003;
13. Condemns radical religious fanaticism and the perversion of cultural and regional identities and religious beliefs and structures for the purposes of terrorism and subversion, resulting in death, violence, injury and intimidation, bringing about in the public a sense of insecurity, apprehension and fear;
14. Notes, furthermore, that recent armed conflict, in addition to the death and destruction in the area concerned, and violent images in the media have contributed to the generation of a culture of violence and given rise to the emergence of aggressive male role models;
15. Believes also that the downward spiral of multiple deprivation, often in urban areas – poor housing, a barren monotonous environment, social exclusion, unsatisfactory employment prospects and poor education – is a factor in alienation, a sense of rejection, lack of respect for human dignity and civic unrest;
16. Considers that the absence of cultural dialogue and solidarity between different communities and creeds helps to fuel conditions for violence and conflict;
17. Believes strongly, as a result, that the fight against terrorism has strong public support; that it requires courage, determination and commitment on the part of those holding public office; and that it is a political and public priority requiring constant and extensive vigilance, co-ordination between a range of partners, effective legislation against violence and a determined and proactive judicial and political approach to racial and religious intolerance and extremism;
18. Wishes for the affirmation of autonomous and unitary European policies on the world scene in order to strengthen

the combating of terrorism and to overcome current differences between European states;

19. Believes that, despite continuing threats from terrorist networks, it is important to maintain a sense of perspective and proportion, and that most people live in peace with their neighbours, follow their religion without restriction, respect the law of the land in which they live and have no desire to overthrow its governments;

20. Consequently, considers that the protection of human rights and civic liberties should be seen as an integral part of the struggle against terrorism, not as an obstacle to it; that the fundamental values of human rights and dignity must not be sacrificed in the combat against terrorism; and that anti-terrorism measures should be reasonable, proportionate and non-discriminatory; that the Council of Europe *Guidelines on human rights and the fight against terrorism* be used as a benchmark in this respect;

21. It is therefore essential that care be taken to avoid discriminatory legislation; arbitrary prolonged detention sometimes without trial; the definition of certain peaceful activities as terrorism; unnecessary increased surveillance powers; and erosion of rights at trials;

22. Welcomes the recent work of the Council of Europe on combating terrorism, such as the amendments to the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism, the publication of the *Guidelines on human rights and the fight against terrorism* and the constant review of measures taken by the Multi-Disciplinary Group on Terrorism;

23. As a consequence of the above, asks local authorities in Europe to:

a. devise strong and clear policies to:

i. foster social cohesion and eradicate social exclusion;

ii. promote tolerance through educational and cultural programmes;

iii. ensure respect for cultural diversity and the peaceful coexistence of different cultures, minorities and communities; and

iv. prevent residential or educational segregation;

b. seek to address in an equitable manner social, political and economic problems in their populations and ensure fair and equal access to public utilities and educational and employment opportunities;

c. encourage and promote regular dialogue between different religious faiths, in other words between their leaders, institutions and communities, ensuring that equal conditions exist for the practice of each faith, and recall in this context the debates of the hearing on intercultural and interfaith dialogue held during the spring session of the Chamber of Local Authorities;

d. remain vigilant and, in particular, take all necessary steps to protect people in places where they gather and in

partnership with specialised agencies and governments, to protect major civil and industrial and nuclear installations;

e. fully inform the public about all threats and risks, planned contingency measures and subsequent crisis management, using up-to-date information technology, including the Internet;

f. take all necessary steps to ensure the co-ordination of emergency services, ensuring that:

i. the chain of command, accountability and responsibilities are clearly defined;

ii. there is a back-up supply of basic services, communications and infrastructure which can be used in the event of a crisis; and

iii. that adequate training exercises and response simulations are organised in advance;

24. In respect of the CLRAE itself, to:

a. ensure that the CLRAE continues to be fully involved with the Council of Europe's Integrated Project on responses to violence in everyday life in a democratic society, and that the results of the Conference on "Tackling terrorism – the role and responsibilities of local authorities", held in Luxembourg, are incorporated into the work of the project;

b. identify particular aspects of the Luxembourg Conference and the current debate which may be further developed at future CLRAE conferences, particularly that on Local Authorities and Crime Prevention, to be held in Prague in 2003;

c. give maximum publicity to the recent publication *Urban Crime Prevention – A guide for local authorities* and organise its translation into a wide range of languages of Council of Europe member countries;

d. co-operate fully with the work of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe towards the establishment of a European observatory for urban safety;

e. consider the preparation of a manual or guide to help local authorities confront terrorism;

f. encourage the strengthening of international co-operation between networks of local authorities in confronting terrorism.

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1. Debated and approved by the Chamber of Local Authorities on 21 May 2003 and adopted by the Standing Committee of the Congress on 22 May 2003 (see Document CPL (10) 5, draft resolution presented by Mrs L. Laurelli and Mr V. Rogov, rapporteurs).