

# CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES OF EUROPE

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## **Recommendation 93 (2001)<sup>1</sup> on the communication and information policy of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe**

The Congress,

1. Recalling its institutional position as the body representing local and regional authorities which is responsible for ensuring that local and regional authorities participate in the achievement of the ideal of European unity, as defined in Article 1 of the Statute of the Council of Europe;

2. Recalling its earlier work to improve information management and communication effectiveness (in particular the three CLRAE seminars on the information society at the local and regional levels organised in 1998-99 by its specialised working group);

3. Having regard to the conclusions of the report "Local and regional information society",<sup>2</sup> the corresponding recommendation (Recommendation 54 (1999)<sup>3</sup> and the Committee of Ministers' reply to this recommendation;

4. After careful examination of Resolution Res(2000)2 of the Committee of Ministers on the Council of Europe's information strategy, laying down the principles of and guidelines for the Organisation's information, communication and public relations policy;

5. Referring in particular to its resolution on the information and communication policy of the CLRAE Resolution 113 (2001) based on the report prepared by Mr Koivisto (Finland), rapporteur;

6. Aware that the information and communication facilities offered by the new digital technologies make profound changes possible in relations between governments and those they govern, even at the local and regional levels;

7. Acknowledging that the new information and communication technologies (NICTs) can help to strengthen local and regional democracy by providing elected representatives and territorial administration with powerful tools with which to do their job more openly and more responsibly;

8. Aware that the new technologies also have the advantage of providing the population with access to the tools and information essential to effective supervision of the democratic process and better participation in the management of public affairs;

9. Acknowledging that the NICTs provide local and regional communities with the means of achieving

unprecedented efficacy and transparency in every aspect of their work;

10. Aware of the exceptional development potential of these technologies, which are used on an ever larger scale in today's world;

11. Underlining that the NICTs still cannot replace the traditional media (press, radio and television) and special contacts must therefore be maintained with their accredited correspondents at the Council of Europe;

12. Congratulates the Committee of Ministers on its determination to continue implementing the Council of Europe's communication and information strategy as set forth in Resolution Res(2000)2, and to make maximum use of the potential of the new digital information and communication technologies to develop and promote the Council of Europe's image and disseminate its principles, its values and its special message;

13. Invites the Committee of Ministers:

*a.* to strengthen interinstitutional dialogue within the Council of Europe, which is vital to the coherence, efficacy and transparency of the activities of its main organs, bodies and departments, by taking advantage of the full potential the new technologies have to offer;

*b.* as part of the special dialogue between the Committee of Ministers and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, to provide in particular for:

*i.* at least one meeting per year between the Chair of the Committee of Ministers and the Presidents of the Congress and its two Chambers;

*ii.* the inclusion on the agenda of a meeting of the Ministers' Deputies, following each plenary session of the Congress, of an item under which the Chief Executive of the Congress presents the outcome of the session, the texts adopted and the action to be taken on them;

*c.* to ensure that the different organs of the Council of Europe harmonise their approaches to communication and information and that the activities of their information and communication units are consistent with one another; experience and resource sharing should not only generate substantial savings but also improve the standard, speed and effectiveness of the work done by the different partners involved;

*d.* to take advantage of the NICTs in all co-operation activities carried out under the aegis of the Council of Europe, with a view to increasing their efficacy and visibility;

*e.* in the framework of intergovernmental co-operation, to foster projects focused on NICT development with a view to allowing member states' citizens to enjoy the benefits of their rapidly expanding potential and of the Council of Europe's know-how and expertise;

*f.* to give prominence in the Council of Europe's co-operation with other European institutions (in particular the European Union and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe) to projects aimed at supporting NICT development in the new democracies of central and eastern Europe, in order to narrow the gaps that exist in this field and also to help them reform their political/administrative systems, including at local and regional level;

*g.* to make the necessary budget resources available in order to provide the departments responsible for communication and information policy in the Organisation with the requisite human resources, equipment and back-up and to provide the staff concerned with regular training;

*h.* to provide in particular the Congress's communication and information unit with resources commensurate with those allocated to the main organs of the Organisation;

*i.* to regularly assess the Council of Europe's communication and information activities so that they constantly keep pace with progress in this field and can be permanently adjusted to the Organisation's aims.

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1. Debated by the Congress and adopted on 31 May 2001, 3rd Sitting (see Doc. CG (8) 10, draft recommendation presented by Mr R. Koivisto, rapporteur).
  2. CG (6) 3 – 6th Plenary Session of the CLRAE, June 1999.
  3. Recommendation 54 (1999) on local and regional information society.