

# THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

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## Resolution 210 (2006)<sup>1</sup> on the Council of Europe campaign to combat trafficking in human beings

1. The Council of Europe campaign to combat trafficking in human beings, which will run from 2006 to 2008, has twin objectives: to raise general awareness of this issue throughout Europe and to promote the earliest possible ratification and signature, by all Council of Europe member states, of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (CETS No. 197), which was opened for signature on 16 May 2005;

2. The Congress made its contribution to this debate through a series of proposals concerning the role of cities and regions in the fight against trafficking in human beings and their sexual exploitation in its Resolution 196 (2005), which highlighted in particular the importance of awareness-raising at local and regional level;

3. The Congress therefore asks the local authorities and associations of local authorities of the 46 member states of the Council of Europe, and the local authorities of non-member and observer states, to fully support the Council of Europe campaign on the fight against trafficking in human beings by:

- a. lobbying those governments which have not already signed or ratified the above convention to do so as swiftly as possible;
- b. fully publicising the campaign through the prominent display in public buildings (including schools) of campaign materials (posters, T-shirts, leaflets, bookmarks, pocket calendars, etc.) and through the organisation of discussion forums, information events and press conferences, ensuring the full involvement of relevant associations and other representatives of civil society;
- c. signing the appended declaration and circulating it widely within their municipalities and regions;

4. The Congress further asks the Committee of Ministers to allocate sufficient resources to this campaign in order to ensure its full resonance with its target public: governments of member states and their citizens.

### Appendix

#### Declaration on the fight against trafficking in human beings

We,

The mayors, leaders and representatives of local authorities of the 46 member states of the Council of Europe,

Are committed to the principle of respect for human rights as expressed in the Council of Europe's Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, especially its Article 3 recognising the right of all people not to be subjected "to inhuman or degrading treatment" and Article 4 prohibiting slavery;

Are gravely concerned by the increase in the scale of human trafficking, a phenomenon that constitutes a terrible violation of human rights and undermines the fundamental principles of democracy and the rule of law;

Recall that it is at local level that the final stage of trafficking is played out and that local authorities have a fundamental role to play as guarantors of social cohesion and their citizen's well-being and security;

Are determined to eradicate this heinous modern-day form of slavery;

Welcome therefore the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (CETS No. 197) which was opened for signature on 16 May 2005;

Pledge our full support to the Council of Europe campaign on combat trafficking in human beings and its twin objectives which are to raise awareness of this issue throughout Europe and to secure the earliest possible ratification and signature, by all Council of Europe member states, of the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings;

Commit ourselves to mobilising all forces at local level in order to ensure that the campaign message is heard at both ends of the scale of governance both at the level of citizens and at the highest levels of state government;

Undertake to make the fight against the trafficking of human beings a top priority for our administrations and to implement as many proposals as possible outlined in Congress Resolution 196 (2005) on the fight against trafficking in human beings and their sexual exploitation: the role of cities and regions, and in particular those aimed at:

- the protection of victims, their rehabilitation and reintegration (such as the creation of resource centres/ support units at local level specialised in assistance to trafficked human beings and working in close co-operation with relevant non-governmental associations);
- provision of specialised training for all actors in this field with regard not only to identification and prevention of trafficking but also victim care;
- increased professional opportunities for women thus rendering them less vulnerable to trafficking.

Call on heads of state and government to:

- sign and ratify the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings as soon as possible if they have not already done so;

- launch and support national anti-trafficking campaigns in close co-operation with local and regional authorities to highlight awareness of this issue among those most at risk;
- fully involve local and regional authorities in the drawing up and implementation of action plans decided at national level as they are directly affected by this phenomenon;
- allocate the requisite competences and financial resources necessary for local and regional authorities to implement

action and programmes at their level to combat trafficking and to provide assistance to its victims.

Show our commitment to this fight by signing the present declaration.

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1. Debated and adopted by the Congress on 31 May 2006, 2nd Sitting (see Document CG (13) 14, **draft resolution presented by S. Barnes** (United Kingdom, L, EPP/CD) rapporteur).