

CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES OF EUROPE

Recommendation 65 (1999)¹ on the current state of, and prospects for, regionalisation in Europe

*(Extract from the Official Gazette of the Council of Europe
– June 1999)*

The Congress,

Bearing in mind the proposal of the Chamber of Regions,

1. Recalling its Recommendation 6 on the Conference on “Regionalisation in Europe: Evolution and Perspectives” and its Recommendation 34 on the draft European charter of regional self-government;
2. Recalling paragraph 8 of the Preamble to the draft European charter of regional self-government, which stipulates that it is not the aim of regionalisation to weaken national unity;
3. Stressing the advantages of regionalisation, which makes it possible to take better account of the territorial particularities within a state and to respond more effectively to the political, social, cultural, economic and ecological aspirations of its inhabitants;
4. Convinced that regionalisation, if implemented in good time and in consultation with the inhabitants of the regions and their representatives, is an effective instrument for preventing conflicts;
5. Recalling that:
 - i. the Committee of Ministers had asked for the opinion of the Steering Committee on Local and Regional Democracy (CDLR) on Congress Recommendation 34 (1997) on the draft European charter of regional self-government;
 - ii. the draft charter proposed by the Congress had received the unanimous support of the Parliamentary Assembly and that the Committee of the Regions, the Assembly of European Regions and the Council of European Municipalities and Regions also supported it;

6. Thanking the CDLR for the work it has carried out over a period of more than a year on the draft charter, taking into account the proposals of the Congress;

7. Regretting nevertheless that the CDLR did not make clear in its Opinion its support for a conventional text, preferring to leave open the question as to whether a future text should be a Council of Europe Convention or a “flexible” recommendation;

8. Recommends that governments:

- a. recognise the value of regionalisation as a political instrument for avoiding tension, or even conflicts, within the state;
- b. draw inspiration from the positive experience of certain European countries, where regionalisation has been a not insignificant factor in improved national cohesion;
- c. take greater advantage of the work of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe to obtain fuller information on the characteristics of regionalisation in member countries and its contributions to political stability, cultural fulfilment and economic development in particular;
- d. where necessary, reconsider the possibility of supporting the draft “European Charter of Regional Self-Government” as a future conventional text of the Council of Europe;

9. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers:

- a. include in its programme of intergovernmental activities specific studies on regions and regionalisation based on the experiments carried out in member states;
- b. take account of the state of regionalisation when examining countries’ applications to join the Council of Europe;
- c. include regionalisation in its monitoring activity;
- d. examine as soon as possible the CDLR’s Opinion on the draft European charter of regional self-government and give the CDLR terms of reference in which priority is given to the preparation of a conventional text rather than a flexible Committee of Ministers recommendation, to be drawn up speedily, preferably by 1 July 2000, on the basis of the Congress Recommendation.

¹ Debated and approved by the Chamber of Regions on 15 June 1999 and adopted by the Standing Committee of the Congress on 17 June 1999 (see Doc. CPR (6) 3 revised, draft Recommendation presented by Mr C. Haegi, Rapporteur).