

CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES OF EUROPE

Resolution 118 (2001)¹ on the draft world charter of local self- government State of discussions

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

1. Bearing in mind the results of the 2nd United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), held in Istanbul in 1996, further to which, in 1998, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS – Habitat) and the World Associations of Cities and Local Authorities Coordination (Waclac) signed a consultation document with a view to working together on the preparation of a world charter of local self-government (hereafter: draft world charter);

2. Having regard to the Opinion No.12 (1999) on the initial draft world charter, which was submitted by Ms Doğanoglu (Turkey, L) to the Congress's 6th Session on behalf of the then Working Group on the European Charter of Local Self-Government;

3. Bearing in mind that the above-mentioned Opinion to the 6th Session of the Congress concerned an initial draft of the world charter prepared by the joint UNCHS/Waclac Expert Group;

4. Considering that the draft world charter was discussed later on, at a total of 8 regional conferences, attended by representatives of local authorities from more than 100 countries and some 50 national governments;

5. Bearing in mind that the amendments and additions recommended at these conferences had been integrated into the text at an expert meeting convened at UNCHS headquarters in Nairobi on 13 and 14 February 2000, which had produced a unanimously approved second draft of the world charter;

6. Taking note that this second text focuses on the constitutional and legal foundations and scope of local self-government, the definition of autonomous local administrative structures, local authorities' responsibilities and financial resources as well as state supervision, public participation in local government and co-operation between local authorities at the national and international levels;

7. Taking note of Dr Gerhard Engel's (Germany) and Mr Alan Lloyd's (United Kingdom) progress report and Recommendation 98 (2001) on the preparatory process for Istanbul +5 and the draft world charter;

8. Taking note of the wide divergence among members of the Commission on Human Settlements (12-23 February 2001) in discussing the idea and the necessity of a world charter of local self-government,

9. Regrets that at this stage formally no agreement was reached on placing the draft world charter on the agenda for the special session of the United Nations Istanbul +5 (2-6 June 2001);

10. Regrets that some delegations rejected the objective of a world charter and that there was significant opposition to the concept as well as content of the current draft world charter;

11. Considers that it is important to support the ongoing dialogue on the principle of subsidiarity and good governance at a local level;

12. Reiterates its opinion that the draft world charter has been designed as an universal legal instrument aimed at contributing to sustainable development of local authorities and, if adopted, will no doubt contribute to strengthening citizens' participation in the decision making process at local level, placing local economic development on a sounder footing and improving social cohesion in cities and regions all over the world;

13. Considers also that a world charter will help promote decentralisation through democratic local authorities and will certainly contribute to strengthening their financial and institutional capacities, while ensuring their transparency, accountability and responsiveness to the needs of people;

14. Reiterates its readiness to participate in an advisory capacity in further work on the draft world charter and to co-operate with Waclac and the United Nations, since the initial draft of the world charter had been modelled on the main lines of the European Charter of Local Self-Government;

15. Welcomes the role played so far by international associations of local authorities in promoting the draft world charter;

16. Encourages European and international associations of local authorities to continue a permanent dialogue with all national governments of the United Nations, especially through its Commission on Human Settlements, with a view of maintaining the draft world charter on the agenda of the United Nations;

17. Instructs its Institutional Committee of the Chamber of Local Authorities to prepare a draft opinion on the second draft world charter with a view to transmitting it to the United Nations.

1. Debated and approved by the Chamber of Local Authorities on 30 May 2001 and adopted by the Standing Committee of the Congress on 31 May 2001 (see Doc. CPL (8) 5, draft resolution presented by Dr G. Engel and Mr A. Lloyd, rapporteurs).