

THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

Resolution 199 (2005)¹ on the Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South East Europe (NALAS)

The Congress,

1. Recalling its Resolution 155 (2003) on the Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe “NALAS-SEE” and the Budva Final Declaration, adopted on 12 October 2004 at the end of the 5th Forum of Cities and Regions of South-East Europe (paragraphs 2.7 to 2.10);

2. Recalling the terms of reference adopted by the Bureau on 10 December 2004 entrusting the Ad hoc Working Group of Local and Regional Representatives of South-East Europe with the specific task of “following the development of the Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe (NALAS), making sure that associations of regions also take part”;

3. Welcomes the fact that since 2001 training seminars have been held for the persons responsible for running the associations of local authorities of South-Eastern Europe and their members, and that various meetings of national co-ordinators have been held with the aid of voluntary contributions;

4. Thanks the Swiss authorities (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) for the significant support they have given, under the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, to the development of the network since its establishment, and the Greek Association of Municipalities (KEDKE), the SOROS Foundation (Local Government Initiative – LGI) and the European Foundation for the Sustainable Development of the Regions (FEDRE) for their backing and support for the development of the NALAS;

5. Thanks the associations of local authorities which have provided secretarial services for the NALAS over the past few years: the National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria (NAMRB) in 2002, the Romanian Federation of Local Authorities (FALR) in 2003, the Association of Units of Local Self-Government of Macedonia² (ZELS) in 2004 and the Association of Municipalities of Albania since April 2005;

6. Welcomes the fact that, at the 11th plenary session of the Congress (27 May 2004), the statutes of the NALAS Association were signed by 12 associations of local authorities of South-Eastern Europe and by the President of the Congress, the Chairperson of Working Table I of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, the President

of FEDRE and the President of the Association of Local Democracy Agencies (ADLA);

7. Is aware of:

a. the importance of the role played by associations of local and regional authorities in furthering the process of democratisation and decentralisation in South-East European countries;

b. the need to develop the expertise of the associations of local and regional authorities of South-Eastern Europe so that they can:

i. provide services to their members (municipalities or regions) to help them reinforce their powers and their management capabilities, particularly their administrative, legal and fiscal capabilities;

ii. develop effective co-operation with government authorities while defending their members’ interests;

8. Welcomes the contribution made by the NALAS to the Ministerial Conference on Effective Democratic Governance at Local and Regional Level (Zagreb, 25-26 October 2004);

9. Stresses the importance of the declaration adopted by the NALAS at this conference,

10. Invites the local and regional authorities of South-Eastern Europe to take account of and implement the recommendations set out in the NALAS Declaration (appended to the Final Declaration of the Zagreb ministerial conference);

11. Invites those in charge of the NALAS to regularly monitor the implementation of the recommendations set out in the Zagreb Declaration to enable close co-operation between the ministries responsible for local self-government and the associations of local authorities of South-Eastern Europe with regard to the work programmes on local self-government established by each country following the Zagreb conference;

12. Invites the NALAS to oversee the preparations for the conference which will be held in Skopje in 2006 to evaluate these work programmes;

13. Undertakes, subject to available funding, to continue to give political and logistical support to the NALAS:

a. with a view to providing information on the network’s activities to members of the Congress; the European Union Committee of the Regions, the Stability Pact, donors and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) by providing a link between the network’s website (www.nalas-see.org) and the Congress website (www.coe.int/congress);

b. to assist the NALAS in securing financial contributions from donors, under the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, to carry out its future activities;

c. with a view to helping implement activities which those in charge of the NALAS consider to be priorities;

14. Therefore invites the NALAS to:

a. hold its first General Assembly as soon as possible so as to set up the different structures of the network (provided for in the statutes) and to turn to good account all the advantages offered by its status of association under the local law on associations of Alsace-Moselle;

b. assert itself as the body best placed to lobby relevant international and European organisations in the financial, political and economic fields on behalf of the local authorities of South-Eastern Europe;

c. establish itself as an association with the maximum possible autonomy;

d. establish an action plan for the coming years by diversifying its activities, in addition to the workshops that have so far been organised, with a view to increasing the number of representatives of associations of local authorities of South-Eastern Europe involved in its activities;

e. set up projects which meet associations' national priorities (reinforcing associations' capabilities in terms of lobbying, training and providing services and expert advice to their members);

f. develop its ability to lobby European Union bodies;

g. foster liaison activities between the members of the network and the other international and European associations of local authorities and with the Association of LDAs and the ENTO Network;

h. contribute to, and takes an active part in, the stabilisation of South-Eastern Europe, by becoming a genuine platform for pooling experience and setting up joint cross-border projects between the different associations belonging to the network, and conducts joint projects, thus demonstrating the added value of the network in relation to the individual projects carried out by the various associations;

i. take an active part in preparing the next Forum of Cities and Regions of South-East Europe to be held in Sinaia (Romania) in November 2005;

11. Welcomes the formal proposal from FEDRE that it contribute to the development and reinforcement of the NALAS in a manner to be jointly determined;

12. Invites the Congress Bureau to look into the possibility of creating, along the lines of the Ad hoc Working Group of Local and Regional Representatives of South-East Europe, an ad hoc working group of elected representatives of the South Caucasus, made up of 11 members from Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Turkey and Russia, with the aim of developing joint co-operation projects to promote local democracy in the South Caucasus, in particular between associations of local authorities, bearing in mind the NALAS's experience in South-Eastern Europe.

1. Debated and adopted by the Congress on 2 June 2005, 3rd Sitting (see Document CG (12) 12, draft resolution presented by G. Angelov ("the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", L, EPP/CD, rapporteur).

2. The use in the text of the term "Macedonia" is for descriptive purposes and the convenience of the reader; it does not reflect the position of the Council of Europe on the question of the name of the state.

