

THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

Resolution 233 (2007)¹

The observation of elections – co-operation between the Congress and national associations of local and regional authorities

1. Local and regional authorities are assuming an ever greater institutional role at both national and international level and are now full stakeholders in the building of a Europe based on democracy, human rights and the rule of law;

2. The Council of Europe Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, set up as a result of a recommendation by the 1st Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe (Vienna, 9 October 1993), has played and continues to play a major part in the Organisation's activities and the building of a Europe without dividing lines;

3. That is in fact why the Committee of Ministers adopted Statutory Resolution (2000) 1 reinforcing the statutory position of the Congress and accordingly revising its Charter;

4. Under the provisions of this statutory resolution, the aims of the Congress, which is the "organ representing local and regional authorities,"² include ensuring the participation of local and regional authorities in implementing European unity, and working in close co-operation with national associations of local and/or regional authorities;

5. The Congress is convinced of the role and usefulness of these associations, which are the vehicles for developing local and regional democracy on our continent and even beyond, and which consequently share our task of strengthening democracy by promoting local and regional self-government;

6. It therefore organised the 1st General Meeting of Associations of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe Member Countries, held in Strasbourg (23-24 February 2006), which demonstrated the importance attached by the associations and the Congress to joint action and increased co-operation and produced a series of proposals to that effect;

7. The Congress particularly welcomes the interest shown by these associations in sharing in the observation of local and regional elections which it regularly carries out in some of its member countries;

8. It is convinced that opening up this activity to participation by elected representatives from the associations'

member authorities can firstly involve the associations more effectively in a European activity and secondly reinforce the Congress' observation missions;

9. The Congress, aware of its institutional responsibility in the Council of Europe, must nevertheless take care to comply with certain criteria for the organisation of the missions themselves and the membership of the delegations;

10. With this in mind, the Bureau of the Congress has adopted the appended provisions, with which associations wishing to join the Congress in observing elections will have to comply;

11. Consequently, in view of the above, the Congress:

a. welcomes this opportunity to develop genuine synergy with the national associations of local and regional authorities of its member countries;

b. adopts the appended provisions and decides to append them to its rules of procedure;

c. invites the national associations of local and regional authorities of the Council of Europe member countries to take part in election observation missions and take note of the appended provisions, on the basis of which the arrangements for missions and the membership of delegations will be decided.

Provisions concerning the participation of national associations of local and regional authorities in election observation missions organised by the Congress

Chapter I – Principles governing the participation of associations to election observation missions organised by the Congress

Article 1

The participation of elected representatives who are members of associations or members of local and/or regional authorities which are themselves members of associations of local and/or regional authorities (hereinafter referred to as "the association") in Congress election observation missions (hereinafter referred to as "the mission") shall take place in the manner specified in the present provisions **and in compliance with the mandate of the Congress in this field of action**, in particular through Article 2, paragraph 3, of Statutory Resolution (2000) 1.

Article 2

The Bureau of the Congress shall hold sole political responsibility for the mission, including the decision to observe the elections, contacts with relevant authorities with a view to the **organisation of the mission, contacts with other national and international observer organisations**, any information or declaration made public before, during and after the mission, institutional use of the mission's findings as well as for monitoring the implementation of any recommendations made as a result of the mission.

Article 3

Missions shall be organised under the aegis of the Congress, and the Congress shall be in sole charge of them:

- i. only a Congress member taking part in the mission may act as head of the delegation;
- ii. only a Congress member taking part in the mission may act as the rapporteur.

Chapter II – Modalities of participation of associations

Article 4 – Composition of the mission

Only members of the association or members of local and/or regional authorities which are themselves members of associations of local and/or regional authorities holding a local or regional electoral mandate in accordance with Article 2 of the Charter of the Congress, including those who are not members of the Congress (hereinafter referred to as “non-member representatives”), may be invited to take part in missions.

Article 5 – Selection of the members of the mission

The Bureau shall hold sole responsibility for the selection of member and non-member representatives. Candidatures shall be submitted to the Congress secretariat at the Bureau’s request.

The selection of members, including non-member representatives, shall be made having regard to geographical balance, balance between political groups and gender parity. The number of non-member representatives should not exceed the number of member representatives taking part in each mission.

Article 6 – Practical organisation of the mission

The Congress secretariat shall have sole responsibility for all material arrangements for the mission.

Article 7 – Length of the mission, deployment and working methods during the mission

Non-member representatives shall take part in the mission in the manner specified by the Congress secretariat for the particular mission as regards the length of the mission, the deployment strategy and working methods adopted during the mission.

Article 8 – Information sessions

The Congress shall hold regular information sessions addressed to observation mission participants, both member and non-member of the Congress.

Article 9 – Communication

The association may publicise its participation in the Congress mission in accordance with the terms of the present provisions and with the relevant arrangements agreed with the Congress secretariat. In so publicising its participation the association shall give prominence to the objectives of the Council of Europe, the Congress and the mission. All documents which the association produces in connection with its participation in the mission shall contain a reference to the Council of Europe and the Congress.

Chapter III – Financial arrangements

Article 10

All clearly identifiable expenses (in particular travel and subsistence expenses) in connection with mission participation by non-member representatives shall be met by the association.

Article 11

Financial participation by the association in meeting general expenditure relating to organisation of the mission (in particular interpretation and travel expenses inside the country receiving the mission) shall be agreed in each case between the Congress and the association by exchange of correspondence between the Chief Executive of the Congress and the secretary general/director of the association.

Article 12

In addition to its share in the expenses referred to in Articles 10 and 11 above, the association may participate in meeting the costs of the mission by means of a voluntary contribution and subject to the terms of the present provisions.

Chapter IV – General provisions

Article 13

The present provisions will enter into force once approved by the Bureau.

Article 14

The present provisions may be modified by the Bureau at any time. Any request for modification shall be formulated in writing by at least four members of the Bureau, and be adopted by simple majority of its members.

1. Debated and adopted by the Standing Committee of the Congress on 28 March 2007 (see Document CG(13)46, draft resolution presented by H.U. Stöckling (Switzerland, R, ILDG), rapporteur).
2. Article 1 of Committee of Ministers Statutory Resolution (2000) 1.