

THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

Resolution 321 (2011)¹ The reform of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities within the Council of Europe reform

1. Local and regional democracy is one of the fundamental pillars of the democracy whose defence and development are the mission of the Council of Europe.

2. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, as a political assembly of local and regional elected representatives, emphasises the important role of local and regional authorities in the construction and advancement of a stable Europe honouring human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

3. Considering the essential mission of the Council of Europe in this process, the Congress asserts:

a. its resolve to contribute efficiently to the action of the Council of Europe in all relevant fields relating to local and regional democracy;

b. its attachment to the values of the Council of Europe of which it is an integral part;

c. its support for the process of reform of the Organisation – with its 47 member states – undertaken by Council of Europe Secretary General, Thorbjørn Jagland, with the backing of the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly.

4. The Congress wishes to make an active contribution to this reform process in keeping with its fields of competence, specific functions and expertise. In 2008 it commenced, and continued in depth in 2009 and 2010, the transformation of its structures, working methods and fields of activity in order to make them more focused and to further increase their efficiency and relevance.

5. In that regard, it stresses the priority assigned since 2010 to the monitoring of local and regional democracy in the Council of Europe member states and to the observation of local and regional elections within the framework of its mission of promoting, protecting and developing local and regional autonomy.

6. It recalls that the way to European integration is also through territorial cohesion, and considers it indispensable to continue strengthening inter-regional and transfrontier co-operation and to give the neighbourhood policy its full support.

7. It welcomes the support given by the Committee of Ministers to the reforms which it has set in motion, and the adoption by the Committee of Ministers on 19 January 2011

of the Statutory Resolution CM/Res(2011)2, endorsing the revision of the Congress Charter and enabling the Congress to take its reforms forward.

8. Accordingly, the Congress undertakes to:

a. finalise the reforms which it commenced in 2008 and continued in 2009 and 2010;

b. enter into a process of constant adaptation and improvement that will enable it to enhance its fulfilment of the fundamental Council of Europe values;

c. embed its activities in the priority fields of action defined by the Organisation and, for that purpose, develop selection criteria for the issues which it will address;

d. perform its function in accordance with the priorities of the Council of Europe, by aiding better co-ordination both in-house and with its European partners, particularly the Committee of the Regions of the European Union;

e. focus its activities on the pursuit of constructive dialogue between central government and local and regional authorities so that the latter are better able to meet their citizens' expectations and needs and to efficiently pursue multi-level governance;

f. sustain and support local and regional authorities so that they may fully perform their specific role in European integration;

g. work in areas that enable it to anticipate the future challenges with which local and regional authorities and European societies will be confronted;

h. contribute more to the policy action of the Council of Europe by providing the Committee of Ministers and the other bodies of the Organisation with its information and recommendations on the status and the future of local and regional democracy and by placing at their disposal its expertise, its networks and its examples of best practice in all fields of action with a local or regional dimension;

i. inform the Council of Europe bodies of its adopted priorities on a two-yearly basis;

j. develop methods of cogent evaluation of the political work of an assembly within the political dialogue with other assemblies;

k. align its Rules of Procedure with the new structures and methods arising from the reform of the Congress and from the revision of its statutory texts, and make them a genuine, accessible, precise and transparent tool for the activities of the Congress.

1. Debated and adopted by the Congress on 22 March 2011, 1st Sitting (see Document [CG\(20\)12](#), explanatory memorandum), rapporteurs: K.-H. Lambertz, Belgium (R, SOC) and A. Knape, Sweden (L, EPP/CD).