

THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

Recommendation 289 (2010)¹ The resources of the Congress and its 2011 budget

1. On the initiative of its Secretary General and with the full support of the Committee of Ministers, the Council of Europe is currently undergoing a far-reaching process of reform affecting both structures and activities.

2. The aim of the reform is to refocus the Organisation's activities on the fundamental values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law, which lie at the very core of the Council of Europe's mission, so as to give it the high political profile it should enjoy.

3. For its part, the Congress – fully aware of local and regional authorities' increasing role in the European construction process and of its own role within the Council of Europe – has been reviewing its remit, activities and working methods since 2008.

4. The reform initiated by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe therefore gives the Congress an opportunity to shape its own review and reform process in a manner that will enable it to develop the best synergy possible within the Organisation while clearly asserting its institutional role.

5. Unfortunately, these reform processes aimed at the essential optimisation and political refocusing are also taking place against the particularly difficult background of the current financial crisis, which is imposing major reductions in resources on governments.

6. The Secretary General was therefore obliged to ask the various bodies within the Council to draw up 2011 budgets that are sharply down on the previous year. For its part, the Congress was asked to prepare a 2011 budget with a 2% reduction.

7. The Congress endorses the position of its Bureau, which agreed to the request for a reduction in the budget when consulted on the matter.

8. The Congress believes that it is important to support the efforts to reform the Council of Europe by making an effort concerning the 2011 budget and that, in this context, it is

also important for it to optimise the impact of its action by concentrating its resources on priority activities and reviewing its structures and working methods.

9. The Congress is convinced of the important role which a Council of Europe refocused on its priorities can play in the European arena and hopes that the reform and the sacrifices made by the various players will generate fresh momentum that will also enable bodies like the Congress to play their full part within the Organisation and in the European institutional arena.

10. The Congress will therefore draw up a budget for 2011 showing a reduction of 2%, in keeping with the request by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, and focusing on the areas deemed to be priorities such as the monitoring of commitments regarding local democracy and the observation of local and regional elections.

11. Given the challenge which the reform represents for the Council of Europe and in the absence of additional budgetary resources for expanding and strengthening its role, the Congress hopes that the synergy of activities and the enhanced dialogue within the Organisation, in particular with the Committee of Ministers, will enable it to continue developing its political role regarding local and regional democracy in the European arena.

12. In the light of the above, the Congress asks the Committee of Ministers to:

a. take note of the total willingness of the Congress to cooperate and ensure the full success of the processes of reforming the Council of Europe and the Congress itself;

b. involve the Congress fully in the discussions concerning the future of the Organisation and afford it its rightful place in this connection;

c. pay due attention to the monitoring by the Congress of the implementation of the European Charter of Local Self-Government and the recommendations it makes following the observation of local and regional elections in certain member countries;

d. study the possibilities for developing regular dialogue between the Committee of Ministers and the Congress at the level of the chairs/presidents or bureaux.

1. Debated and adopted by the Standing Committee on behalf of the Congress on 18 June 2010 (see Document CG(18)17, explanatory memorandum presented by J.-C. Frécon, France (L, SOC), rapporteur).