

THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

Declaration 1 (2013)¹ **The situation of local and regional politicians in Turkey**

1. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe has often expressed its grave concern about the continued mass detention of local elected politicians in Turkey, including Leyla Güven, Mayor of Viransehir and former Congress member, detained since 2009.

2. Acting on the basis of the report of the Congress delegation that visited Ms Güven in prison on 6 October 2011, the Congress, through the present declaration, reaffirms its position that the detention of a number of mayors and city councillors, who are thus prevented from fulfilling their duties to the citizens, is debilitating for local democracy.

3. The Congress furthermore expresses its support for the ongoing efforts to establish dialogue – in the framework of the so-called “Imrali process” – and reiterates its condemnation of violence and terrorism in any form as a way of resolving disputes.

4. The Congress hopes that these positive developments may constitute a step forward in the process of ensuring that local elected politicians may freely exercise their duties and responsibilities, in accordance with the provisions of the European Charter of Local Self-Government (ETS No. 122).

5. The Congress will continue to monitor the situation in Turkey, as part of its mandate to examine possible violations of the charter. It therefore:

a. mandates the Monitoring Committee to organise a fact-finding mission, if considered necessary, in line with the mandate of the Congress and the European Charter of Local Self-Government;

b. requests a follow-up visit to Ms Güven, whom the Congress considers a symbol of the imprisoned local elected representatives in Turkey, by the same delegation that visited Ms Güven in 2011 and kindly requests the Turkish delegation to assist in obtaining the permission of the Turkish authorities for such a visit.

1. Adoption by the Congress on 20 March 2013, 2nd Sitting (see Document CG(24)17), rapporteur: Amy Koopmanschap, Netherlands (L, SOC).