

THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

Resolution 222 (2006)¹ on the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) – Draft guidelines on decentralisation and the strengthening of local authorities

The Congress, further to a proposal from its Bureau,

1. Regard being had to:

- a. its Charter and Statutory Resolution (2000) 1;
 - b. the European Charter of Local Self-Government (ETS No. 122);
 - c. the draft guidelines on decentralisation and the strengthening of local authorities (hereinafter “the draft guidelines”) prepared by the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (HSP/GC/20/7);
2. Bearing in mind its own Opinions Nos. 12 (1999) and 17 (2002), Recommendation 98 (2001) and Resolutions 118 (2001) and 138 (2002) on United Nations work in connection with preparing a draft world charter of local self-government;
3. Taking the view that the existence of local authorities with proper autonomy and responsibilities can provide both more effective administration of public affairs and greater citizen participation in political life;
4. Recognising that a United Nations statement of basic principles regarding decentralisation of powers and local self-government, and the preparation of a legal instrument illustrating the emergence of a world consensus on those principles, represent a significant advance for peace preservation, democratisation and social and economic progress;

5. Underlining the positive outcome of the high level contacts between a Congress delegation and the Deputy Director of the New York office of UN-HABITAT of July 2006;

6. Believing that the decentralising reforms by Council of Europe member states have helped to promote more democratic, more egalitarian and more prosperous societies in Europe;

7. Convinced too, that the assistance and co-operation programmes organised by the Council of Europe and its partners for carrying through those reforms, together with monitoring to ensure that implementation in the member states complies with the basic principles of local self-government, have helped to make a success of the reforms;

8. Welcoming the resolution which the Policy Committee of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions adopted in support of the draft guidelines at Innsbruck on 10 May 2006;

9. Gives the draft guidelines its full backing;

10. Reiterates its wish to see work on a world charter of local self-government resume as soon as possible;

11. Points out the importance of speeding up current work by its Institutional Committee and Group of Independent Experts on opening the European Charter of Local Self-Government (ETS No. 122) to accession by other countries not members of the Council of Europe;

12. Calls on the Institutional Committee to take the draft guidelines into account, when they are adopted, in its country-by-country evaluations of the situation regarding local and regional self-government;

13. Calls on the Bureau of the Congress, in particular the Local Chamber, to pursue its contacts with UN-HABITAT and to take further initiatives so as to create closer co-operation with the European Liaison Office of UN-HABITAT in Brussels responsible for European affairs, in order that the principles of local democracy be further enhanced in all member states of the United Nations.

1. Debated and adopted by the Standing Committee of the Congress on 14 November 2006 (see Document CG(13)31, draft resolution presented by I. Micallef (Malta, L, EPP/CD), rapporteur).