

THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

Resolution 390 (2015)¹ Trends in regionalisation in Council of Europe member States

The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe,

1. Considering:

a. The Council of Europe Reference Framework for Regional Democracy (2009);

b. The Helsinki Declaration on Regional Self-Government (2002);

c. its Resolution 361 (2013) and Recommendation 346 (2013) on regions and territories with special status in Europe;

d. its Resolution 83 (1999) and Recommendation 65 (1999) on the current state of and prospects for regionalisation in Europe;

2. Underlining that the variety of forms of sub-national governance found in Council of Europe member States mainly reflects their historical, political, social and cultural diversity;

3. Observing the constant adaptation of forms of regional governance to changing political and economic contexts;

4. Convinced of the benefits, in terms of economic development, growth and quality public services, that regionalisation can bring, when regional authorities are attributed substantial powers and resources, are politically accountable to the population and interact with their European, national and local counterparts in a spirit of multilevel governance;

5. Observing that regionalisation has allowed the emergence in many European States of powerful regional actors with effective political and economic powers;

6. Noting with concern that in recent years, with the exception of the introduction of new metropolitan authorities in some countries, the decentralisation process in Europe appears to have stalled;

7. Noting that the economic and financial crisis that erupted in 2008 has obliged public authorities to reflect on their territorial organisation, including at the regional level;

8. Noting that, since 2008, there has been a trend in some countries to recentralise powers;

9. The Congress:

a. Supports and encourages member States' policies on regionalisation that respect the principle of subsidiarity and the territorial cohesion of States;

b. Reaffirms that regionalisation policies must be pursued keeping in mind the need for territorial solidarity within the framework of national States;

c. Reaffirms the need for regions to have a legal status and clearly defined powers, anchored in their constitution or legislation, and that they should manage a substantial share of public affairs and be free to exercise their initiative in any matter that is not excluded from their powers or assigned to another authority, and that any supervision or limitation of their powers should be based on the constitution and/or the law;

d. Reaffirms the need for regions to have resources that they can use freely, enabling them to effectively and efficiently exercise their powers, within the framework of national or federal solidarity;

e. Invites its Governance Committee to continue its reflection on regionalisation, with an annual update on this matter;

f. Invites its Bureau to take this resolution and its explanatory memorandum into account in its reflection on the regulatory changes that it is planning or considering, especially as regards the composition of the Chamber of Regions.

1. Debated and approved by the Chamber of Regions on 21 October 2015 and adopted by the Congress on 22 October 2015, 3rd Sitting (see Document [CPR/2015\(29\)2FINAL](#), explanatory memorandum), rapporteur: Marie-Madeleine Mialot Muller, France (R, SOC).