

THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

Resolution 241 (2007)¹ Universities and regional development

1. The Congress considers that a region's cultural development is a key to its development as a whole, and that universities have a great potential, which is not yet fully realised, for developing the culture of Europe's regions. Universities are well-placed to stimulate cultural development and to foster, develop and preserve regional identities, thereby promoting regional stability and improving the quality of life in the regions. As institutions in charge of developing and enlarging the knowledge and competencies of citizens, universities are uniquely positioned in this respect.

2. Universities can and should have a major impact on the culture of their surrounding regions. There is a wide spectrum of activities in which they are natural actors in this respect, such as stimulating and preserving regional cultural activities and identities, supporting the development of regional history and arts, stimulating research and building a strong regional research base as well as attracting intellectual capital to the region and contributing to its development.

3. The old model of university autonomy – which still persists in some countries – where universities exist uniquely for the benefit of their students and academics, has little positive impact on regional development and needs to be replaced by the idea of the university as a catalyst for the development of the surrounding regions, using dynamic new forms of co-operation.

4. The challenge for the regions is to work closely with the universities, to ensure that their resources benefit the community as a whole. Regional authorities have an

important role to play in fostering networks and partnerships between universities, local businesses and industry.

5. In the light of the above, the Congress recommends that the regions of Council of Europe member states:

a. recognise the contribution that universities can make in developing regional cultures;

b. seek to realise the potential of universities in preserving and maintaining the culture of the surrounding regions, using their specialised knowledge and research capabilities;

c. aim to co-operate with universities in developing museums, libraries and special collections relating to the culture of the surrounding regions;

d. recognise the role that universities can play in cross-border co-operation, increasing student and academic mobility and generating cultural and economic benefits for the whole population of a region;

e. contribute to interuniversity networks by co-operating with surrounding regions to ensure greater student and academic mobility;

f. seek to foster new partnerships and new forms of co-operation between universities, regional authorities, industry and business with a view to exchange of knowledge and good practice, mutual support and the pooling of resources;

g. ensure university representation on regional cultural development councils.

6. The Congress invites its Committee on Culture and Education to enlarge the debate on these issues at a conference to be held in Kazan (Russian Federation) in 2008 on the contribution of universities to regional cultural development.

1. Debated and approved by the Chamber of Regions on 30 May 2007 and adopted by the Congress on 1 June 2007, 3rd Sitting (see Document CPR(14)2RES, draft resolution presented by F. Mukhametshin (Russian Federation, R, ILDG) and A. Vogtel (Germany, R, EPP/CD), rapporteurs).