

THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

Recommendation 197 (2006)¹ on urban security in Europe

1. Issues of urban security are more topical than ever before: the local political authority has a decisive role to play in this field, both as the interface between the different technical services concerned and also as interlocutor for the different levels of government; it is also answerable to the electorate for security in the town, or the electorate's perception of it;

2. The degree of complexity which urban security matters have acquired requires multiple strategies involving numerous multidisciplinary areas and specialities relating not just to the police and the judiciary, but also to other sectors of the administration and the social sphere;

3. While the action to be taken throughout the European and pan-European area is necessary, it is equally important that account be taken of the diversity of administrative territories in which security strategies must apply, and of the apportionment of responsibility among the various public services within states;

4. The Congress is aware that the practice whereby territorial authorities resort to private-sector organisations to provide certain security-related services is on the increase and that this practice may carry risks where data protection and access to security systems in general are concerned;

5. The Congress is convinced that the basis for any action in this matter must lie in the establishment of a structured, effective dialogue between the state, local and regional authorities and the various players involved in the problem of urban security;

6. It is also aware that urban security has been, and still is, the subject of numerous studies and that instruments for combating crime have been developed by international organisations, by states through bilateral or multilateral co-operation, by towns and cities and regions, and by non-governmental organisations;

7. Similarly, and for the purpose of developing synergy among all concerned, it is essential that data, information and thinking about urban security can be pooled in a common reservoir such that knowledge is enhanced and decision making facilitated;

8. The Congress is convinced of the absolute priority which must be given to building a Europe of security, freedom and justice, and that this requires a capacity to share and benefit from information and trials conducted at national, European and international level, together with accessibility to them for the various players involved;

9. In this connection, it is also aware that in the matter of urban security there is often no objective knowledge of the problems nor any continuous monitoring of the impact of decisions and their success or failure, and that available information about practices and action implemented in Europe is neither brought to the notice of the general public nor – in most cases – kept up to date;

10. In this field, as in many others, if tangible results are to be obtained it is vital that action should be extended over the medium term, in particular by means of initial and further training for the various partners in prevention policies;

11. The Congress welcomes the fact that, in the Declaration adopted at the 3rd Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe on 16 May 2005 in Warsaw, the member states marked their determination to guarantee the security of their citizens while fully upholding human rights and fundamental freedoms and their other relevant international obligations;

12. It is pleased to note that this determination is again asserted in the Action Plan adopted on 16 May 2005 in Warsaw, where the member states propose to pursue their efforts to combat terrorism, corruption, organised crime and cybercrime;

13. In this regard, the Council of Europe has for several years demonstrated its commitment to the promotion of urban security, in particular the Parliamentary Assembly in Recommendation 1531 (2001) on security and crime prevention in cities: setting up a European Observatory; the Congress in Resolution 99 (2000) on crime and urban insecurity in Europe: the role of local authorities; and the integrated project "Responses to violence in everyday life in a democratic society", carried out from 2002 to 2004 at the instigation of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe;

14. Lastly, the Congress wishes to emphasise the essential nature of co-operation in this field at European level, having regard in particular to the activities of the European Union, which was at the root of the creation, in May 2001, of a European Crime Prevention Network, and also by the European Forum for Urban Safety (EFUS);

15. Having regard to the foregoing, the Congress recommends that the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe give its support to the participation of the Organisation, and in particular of the Congress, in the creation of a "European Resource Centre for Urban Security", which should be the subject of co-operation between organisations, research institutes and public agencies in this sphere and which would pursue the following aims in particular:

a. develop synergy between the various field workers and the existing networks;

b. improve the collection of quantitative and qualitative data;

c. provide initial and further training for those involved in prevention;

d. improve knowledge of existing strategies to promote urban security and foster the exchange of experience and good practice;

e. promote public debate in Europe on questions of security and violence in order to combat the population's feelings of insecurity;

16. The Congress invites the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe to support the project for a European

Resource Centre for Urban Security and envisage the possibility of participating within the framework of its attributions.

1. Debated and approved by the Chamber of Local Authorities on 31 May 2006 and adopted by the Standing Committee of the Congress on 1 June 2006 (see Document CPL (13) 5, draft recommendation presented by J.-M. Bockel (France, L, SOC) rapporteur).