

Press Release

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"Ratification by France of the European Local Self-Government Charter is an important development for local democracy in this country", says Ian Micallef

Strasbourg, 17.01.2007 – "On behalf of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, I welcome the deposition by France of ratification instruments for the European Charter of Local Self-Government which, I am sure, will boost decentralisation processes in this country and the transfer of more competences and financial means to local communities," stated Ian Micallef, President of the Congress Chamber of Local Authorities, in a declaration issued today.

"Without a doubt, this step is an important development for local democracy in France, but also for Europe as a whole, as now all 27 the European Union's member states and 42 out of the Council of Europe's 46 member states have ratified this cornerstone treaty in the field of local self-government," he added.

"It is symbolic that the ratification comes as we celebrate 50 years of local democracy on our continent, with the first session of the European Conference of Local Authorities having taken place in Strasbourg in January 1957," continued Ian Micallef. "It is also symbolic because the first President of the Conference, which was the precursor of the Congress, was a renowned French statesman, Jacques Chaban-Delmas."

Adopted by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers in 1985, this Charter sets out the principle that effective local self-government is essential to democracy. It serves as a model for legislative reform for local democracy. The principle that the delivery of public services should be delegated to the level closest to the citizen – the principle of subsidiarity, equally laid down in the Charter – was also recognised by the European Union in its draft Constitutional Treaty.

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