

Press Release

Communication Unit of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities

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Congress celebrates 50 years of local democracy in Europe with a round table

Strasbourg, 25.05.2007 - As part of the Congress plenary session a round table will be held on Wednesday 30 May 2007, at the Palais de l'Europe in Strasbourg (France), to mark the 50th anniversary of local democracy in Europe.

On 12 January 1957 the European Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe opened its first session in Strasbourg under the chairmanship of French politician Jacques Chaban-Delmas. Over the years, the Conference developed and, in 1994, was renamed the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, its primary objective being to foster and strengthen democracy at the local and regional levels.

The round table will be an opportunity to look back at the road travelled since 1957 and examine the current situation of local and regional democracy, both in the Council of Europe's 47 member states and beyond Europe's borders.

Among those taking part in this round table moderated by journalist Daniel Riot are Walter Schmied, Vice-President of the Parliamentary Assembly and Chair of the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs, Neris Germanas, Thematic Co-ordinator of Local and Regional Co-operation (TC-LARC) for the Committee of Ministers and Ambassador of Lithuania to the Council of Europe, António Paiva, President of the Commission for Constitutional Affairs of the Committee of the Regions of the European Union and Mayor of Tomar (Portugal), Ivan Jacovic, Vice-President of the Assembly of European Regions (AER) and President of the Region of Istria (Croatia), and Heinrich Hoffschulte, Honorary Vice-President of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR).

The round table will be webcast live and a video recording will subsequently be made available on-line at: www.coe.int/congress/fr

Two press briefings will be organised at the Palais de l'Europe (room 1), on Tuesday 29 May from 3.45 to 4.30 p.m. and on Wednesday 30 May from 9.30 to 10.15 a.m.

Press contacts

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The Congress has two chambers, the Chamber of Local Authorities and the Chamber of Regions. It brings together 318 full and 318 substitute members representing more than 200 000 European territorial communities. President of the Congress Halvdan Skard (Norway, SOC), President of the Chamber of Regions: Yavuz Milden (EPP/CD, Turkey), President of the Chamber of Local Authorities : Ian Micallef (Malta, EPP/CD). Political Groups : Socialist Group (SOC), Group of the European People's Party – Christian Democrats (EPP/CD), Independent and Liberal Democrat Group (ILDG).