

Press Release

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Committee on Sustainable Development to discuss climate change, responsible consumption and urbanisation effects on biodiversity

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Strasbourg, 04.12.2007 – Meeting in Strasbourg on 5 and 6 December, the Congress' Committee on Sustainable Development will examine the challenges that are faced by local and regional authorities such as the loss of biodiversity, adapting to climate change, and current consumption modes. The response to these environmental issues requires a responsible attitude by public authorities, changes to citizen behaviour, and the development of a new energy culture.

The Committee will debate in particular reports by Svetlana Orlova (Russia, EPP/CD) and Ingrid Franzen (Germany, SOC) on a strategy for the vulnerability reduction and adapting to climate change as a challenge for territorial communities. On this occasion, an exchange of views will be held with Manfred Stock, Director in the Institute of Research of impacts of climate change (Potsdam, Germany).

This discussion follows a workshop organised earlier this year, and builds on a 2007 report on local and regional approaches to climate change, by Amrit Mediratte (United Kingdom, EPP/CD). A related report, by Valery Baranov (Ukraine, EPP/CD) and Maria Cristina Spinosa (Italy, SOC), dealing with public territorial action for a new energy culture, will also be discussed, with the participation of Bernd Vögerle, rapporteur of the EU Committee of the Regions, and Gérard Magnin from Energie-Cités (France).

Responsible citizens' consumption for sustainable development is another highlight of the meeting, based on a report by Valery Kadokhov (Russia, SOC) and an exchange of views with Francis Ribeyre, Professor of the Institute EGID (Environment, Geo-engineering and Development) from Bordeaux, France.

A major debate will also be held on the effects of urbanisation on biodiversity, in the light of the urgent need to reverse biodiversity loss, especially in urban areas. Willy Borsus (Belgium, ILDG) will present his draft report on the subject, and Carolina Lasen Diaz from the Secretariat of the Bern Convention will describe Council of Europe action on biodiversity. The debate will include an exchange of views with Claude Auroi, Professor of the Institute of development studies (IUED) from Geneva, Switzerland.

These draft texts will be presented at the Congress' Spring Session (Malaga, Spain, 12-14 March 2008), which will be devoted to sustainable development issues.

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 Meldon (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**).