

Press Release

Communication Unit of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities

Ref:091a08

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Forum in Dubai of mayors of Arab and European cities

Strasbourg, 07.02.2008 – The Euro-Arab Cities Forum will meet in Dubai (United Arab Emirates) on 10 and 11 February 2008. This conference, which is part of the policy of dissemination of values of the European Charter of Local Self-Government to the Arab world, will allow exchanges of best practice among European and Arab towns and cities on subjects of common interest such as environment and water, transport and spatial planning, or the cultural heritage.

The Forum is jointly organised by the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions, the Arab Towns Organisation (ATO), the Standing Committee for the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership of Local and Regional Authorities (COPPEM), the Arab Urban Development Institute (AUDI) and Dubai Municipality. It was preceded by two conferences of Euro-Arab cities – in Marrakech (Morocco) in October 1988 and in Valencia (Spain) in September 1994 – which were organised following the friendship and co-operation agreement between Arab and European cities signed in Valencia in 1984.

Attending the Forum will be mayors from 40 European and 40 Arab cities and the representatives of international organisations (the EU Committee of the Regions, the World Bank, WWF, the UN and the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly).

The President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, Halvdan Skard, will deliver a speech at the opening of the Forum, and the President of the Congress's Chamber of Local Authorities, Ian Micallef, will chair the Forum's first session (at 11 am on Wednesday 10 February) which will be devoted to local governance.

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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).