

Press Release

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City diplomacy - a conflict resolution tool for local authorities

Strasbourg, 13.03.2008 - The Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities has considered a recommendation and a resolution on "city diplomacy" at its Spring session in Malaga.

In his report, rapporteur Onno van Veldhuizen (Netherlands, L, IDLG) notes that cities have become major political players on the international stage and help, via their networks, to build and consolidate peace in distant parts of the globe. City diplomacy is the tool used by local authorities and their associations to promote conflict prevention and resolution and post-conflict reconstruction.

In the texts adopted in Malaga, the Congress called on local authorities to structure their activities in the field of diplomacy and conflict resolution. It also undertook to continue supporting the Local Democracy Agencies, the North-South Centre and the Municipal Alliance for Peace in their efforts to use city diplomacy, and to continue its work to establish a dialogue between European and Arab cities.

The Congress also recommended that the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers should encourage member states to support city diplomacy activities and should also acknowledge the potential of city diplomacy for strengthening intercultural dialogue in the White Paper it is preparing on this issue.

An awareness of the growing role of cities in conflict resolution is reflected in the holding of the first world conference on city diplomacy, to be held in The Hague, Netherlands, from 11 to 13 June 2008 with the participation of the Congress.

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**).