

Press Release

Communication Unit of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities

Ref:242a08

Tel: : +33 3 90 21 49 36

Fax : +33 3 88 41 27 51

congress.com@coe.int

www.coe.int/congress



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Congress' Institutional Committee prepares missions to Latvia and Belgium, discusses Greece and Turkey

Strasbourg, 04.04.2008 – The Congress' Institutional Committee will meet in Strasbourg on 7 April to discuss regional democracy in Greece, local and regional democracy in Turkey and the revised draft European Charter of Regional Democracy, among other things.

In his report on regional democracy in Greece, Jean-Claude van Cauwenberghe (Belgium, SOC) points to the need for reform at regional level, aimed at democratising regions and coupled with institutional reform to develop regional self-government. The rapporteur is of the opinion that Greece should have only two tiers of sub-state authorities: strong municipalities (but fewer of them) and strong regions – hence the need to integrate the intermediate level, such as prefectures. In addition, central government will have to abandon its "supervisor" mentality if "regionalism" is to progress in Greece, the report says.

The Institutional Committee will also discuss preparations for the fact-finding mission to Latvia - scheduled for mid-April, to be headed by Jean-Claude Frécon (France, SOC) - and the mission to Belgium, which will take place in May and will be led by Anders Knappe (Sweden, EPP/CD). Both missions follow the decisions by the Bureau of the Chamber of Local Authorities. The Committee will also hear information about the first mission to Turkey for the preparation of a monitoring report, which took place from 25 to 27 February, by rapporteurs Anders Knappe and Hans Ulrich Stöckling (Switzerland, ILDG).

In addition, the Committee will examine the revised draft European Charter of Regional Democracy, presented by Jean-Claude van Cauwenberghe, and a report on regional public finance policies in Europe (by Karsten Behr, Germany, EPP/CD). Further reports on the institutional relations between the executive body and the administrative body in local government (by Pascal Mangin, France, EPP/CD) and the incorporation of the European Charter of Local Self-Government into domestic legislation and case law of the signatory states (by Christopher Newbury, United Kingdom, EPP/CD) are under preparation within the Committee.

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**),
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