

Press Release

Communication Unit of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities

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Congress observes local elections in Israel

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Jerusalem, 12.11.2008 – A Congress delegation observed the municipal elections in Israel on 11 November 2008, at the invitation of the Union of Local Authorities in Israel (ULAI) and Israeli authorities. This is the first time that the Congress has observed local elections in this country and it was the only international observer on site.

The delegation, led by Jean-Claude Frécon (France, SOC, L), held a working meeting with Meir Sheetret, Minister of the Interior of the Israeli government, and met many representatives of local authorities as well as university academics specialising in elections.

The delegation was deployed in the areas of Rishon Lezion, Kfar Sava, Levahim-Rahat, Ramla and Jerusalem.

"Local democracy in Israel is remarkably active and dynamic despite the low turnout observed, particularly in Jewish communities and large towns," said Senator Frécon after the day of observation.

In this connection, the Congress delegation regretted that the local elections were held on a working day (unlike the national elections), as this probably affected turnout.

It also noted a degree of depoliticisation of local elections, in which the major national parties frequently took no part.

To follow up on the observation, Head of the delegation Jean-Claude Frécon will present a report at the Congress's autumn session (1, 2 and 3 December 2008).

[Information memorandum](#)

Members of the Congress delegation:

Jean-Claude Frécon, Vice-President, municipal councillor for Pouilly-lès-Feurs and Senator (France, SOC, L) – **Head of the delegation**

Susan Bolam, member, Northumberland County Council (United Kingdom, EPP/CD, R)

Ian Micallef, President of the Chamber of Local Authorities, councillor for Gzira (Malta, EPP/CD, L)

Dobrica Milovanovic, Deputy Mayor of Kragujevac (Serbia, NI, R)

Fabio Pellegrini, Vice-President, municipal councillor for Rapolano Terme (Italy, SOC, L)

Paolo Rondelli, municipal councillor for San Marino (San Marino, SOC, L)

Secretariat

Antonella Cagnolati, Director of the Congress

Jean-Philippe Bozouls, Executive Secretary of the Chamber of Local Authorities of the Congress

Stéphanie Poirel, Co-Secretary of the Institutional Committee

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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 : Yavuz Milden (Turkey, EPP/CD), President of the Chamber of Regions: Ludmila Sfirloaga (Romania, SOC),

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**).

