

**Declaration by the youth delegates to the
27th Session of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities**

For the first time in its history, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities included a delegation of young people from over 35 countries in its 27th Session, under the overarching theme *Empowering Youth: a shared responsibility for cities and regions*.

The Youth delegates present in Strasbourg from 13 to 16 October 2014:

Welcome the inclusion of the topic by the Congress and the importance the Congress thereby puts on the involvement of young people at all levels;

Emphasize that Youth involvement in decision making is an essential step towards giving young people a voice and creating sustainable youth policies which cater for the real needs of young people, and contributes to the general development of the community by empowering youth;

Acknowledge the local and regional authorities that currently recognise the value and importance of involving young people in decision making and have implemented systems for such processes;

Recall the Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life and the pressing need for its implementation by towns and regions in all 47 member states, 11 years after the adoption of Congress Recommendation 128(2003) – and 22 years after the first version of the text;

Urge local and regional authorities, to uphold their position and strengthen the role of youth in decision-making processes through concrete actions such as:

- Setting up information and communication systems for easy access to relevant information on policy, rights and opportunities for young people;
- Promoting and supporting the development of youth organisations and youth councils on different levels as models and arenas of youth participation and for the democratic development for young people;
- Creating effective systems of co-management that truly involve representative young people in decision making at the highest levels. The Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe and good practices from the European Youth Capitals shall provide useful references and models to this;

- Promoting and implementing citizenship education in formal and non-formal systems, recognising youth organisations as important partners and providers in the field;
- Promoting and using a cross-sectorial approach to youth policy, which includes relevant actors from public, private and civil society sectors for a wholesome and effective impact on young people's lives;
- Creating effective tools to fight youth unemployment, which is one of the main barriers to full involvement in community and democratic life, such as the promotion of quality internships, support to young entrepreneurs and taxation policies that are conducive to youth employment;
- Considering budget allocation to youth involvement and co-management systems as sustainable investments for the development of cities or regions.

Call for a stronger involvement of Youth in the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, by:

- Implementing co-management structures in the Congress as well as committing in the long-term to youth empowerment at the European level in coordination with the Advisory Council on Youth and the European Youth Forum as the representative European platform of young people;
- Defending and promoting the inclusion of young people in the national delegations to the Congress as per paragraph 11 of Congress Resolution 346(2012) on youth and democracy: the changing face of youth political engagement;
- During missions to monitor the implementation of the European Charter on Local Self-Government, taking stock of the state of youth policies and mechanisms to promote the participation of young people through dialogue with young people and/or their representatives;
- Monitoring and following up the implementation of the *Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life* at all levels.

The Youth delegates

Strasbourg, 16 October 2014