

PRESS RELEASE

**Council of Europe
Congress of Local and
Regional Authorities**



T +33(0)390214895

www.coe.int/congress

congress.web@coe.int

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Situation in Ukraine and annexation of Crimea the focal point of Congress session debates

Strasbourg 19 March 2014 - The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe will debate the situation in Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea during its 26th Session, to be held from 25 to 27 March 2014 in Strasbourg (France).

The members of the Bureau of the Congress will, on 24 March, examine in particular a draft declaration on this subject. Subject to their approval, an urgent debate on the situation in Ukraine will take place on 25 March.

Otherwise, the session will focus on "Empowering youth: a shared responsibility for cities and regions". This is the theme running through the year's work during 2014, with the objective of offering a forum for discussion amongst European local and regional elected representatives on young people's participation as players in local and regional democracy. Several debates centering on this theme will therefore be held during the session, starting with "Is there a real place for young people in local and regional democracy?" on 25 March, followed by "Fostering youth employment through education and training: role and best practices within regions in Europe" and "Empowering Roma youth through participation: effective policy design at local and regional levels" on 26 March. There will also be a debate on 27 March on "Youth participation – Voting at 16?".

In October, at the 27th Session, young people from various national delegations will be invited to take part in the debates.

The March session will also be an opportunity to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the setting up of the Congress in 1994 – which followed the Summit of Heads of State and Government in Vienna in 1993 – as the successor to the European Conference of Local Authorities, representing the 47 member states' cities and regions.

Members of the Congress will also debate the implementation of human rights at local and regional level, as well as examining several monitoring reports on local and regional democracy in Europe, relating more specifically to Armenia, the Netherlands the United Kingdom and Sweden, and the results of post-monitoring dialogue in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Le Congrès se compose de deux chambres, la Chambre des pouvoirs locaux et la Chambre des régions. Il comprend 318 membres titulaires et 318 suppléants, qui représentent plus de 200 000 collectivités territoriales européennes.

Président du Congrès: Herwig Van Staa (Autriche, PPE/CCE), Président de la Chambre des régions: Nataliya Romanova (Ukraine, GILD), Président de la Chambre des pouvoirs locaux: Jean-Claude Frécon (France, SOC)
Groupes politiques: Groupe socialiste (SOC), Groupe du Parti populaire européen (PPE/CCE), Groupe indépendant et libéral démocratique (GILD), Groupe Conservateurs & Réformistes européen (CRE)