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## **Congress monitoring visit in Spain: "The crisis is an opportunity to renovate the system of local and regional democracy"**

Madrid, 08.06.2012 - A delegation of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe carried out a monitoring visit to Spain from 5 to 8 June 2012. The objective is to assess the situation of local and regional democracy in light of the European Charter of Local Self-Government which Spain ratified in 1988. This mission is also meant to update the last recommendation adopted in 2002.

The delegation was composed of two rapporteurs on local and regional democracy. Marc Cools (Belgium, ILDG) and Leen Verbeek (The Netherlands, SOC).

"This visit takes place at a crucial moment in Spain when Spanish authorities are currently considering modifying the basic legislation governing local authorities" said Leen Verbeek. "The objective of this revision is, according to the Spanish authorities, to eliminate duplications, strengthening the efficiency of the existing tiers of government and ensuring the concomitant financing of all allocated competences to local authorities. There is a real possibility of achieving this ambition" he added.

"This crisis hit Spain very severely", said Marc Cools. "But it also constitutes an opportunity to be seized in order to renovate the system of local and regional democracy in Spain".

The delegation will pursue its contacts with the Spanish authorities in the coming months and intends to come back to Spain before the end of this year. A recommendation on the situation of local and regional democracy in Spain will be submitted for adoption to the Congress Session in March 2013.

[More information on the European Charter of Local Self-Government](#)

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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: Keith Whitmore (United Kingdom, ILDG), President of the Chamber of Regions: Herwig van Staa (Austria, EPP/CD), President of the Chamber of Local Authorities: Jean-Claude Frécon (France, SOC)

Political Groups: Socialist Group (SOC), Group of the European People's Party – Christian Democrats (EPP/CD), Independent and Liberal Democrat Group (ILDG).