



T +33(0)390214895

www.coe.int/congress

congress.web@coe.int

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Graz declaration on the implementation of human rights

Graz, 29 May 2015 – A declaration on the implementation of human rights was adopted today by the representatives of the Congress of the Council of Europe, in the presence of local and regional decision makers from 25 countries, on the occasion of the international implementation forum “Focusing on Human Rights” on 28-29 May 2015 in Graz, Austria.

The declaration underlines the importance of making local and regional authorities more conscious of their role in this field and highlights the fact that their particularly close relationship to citizens makes them the most suitable bodies to assess at first hand the human rights situation.

It calls on local and regional authorities to raise awareness among politicians and civil servants and to tackle the root causes of social exclusion by putting in place a human rights culture within their administration.

The declaration invites national authorities to support local and regional politicians and to put in place institutions and a co-ordinated human rights approach to policy making at all levels of governance.

It also stresses the importance of allocating sufficient funds to local and regional authorities and reminds national authorities of the repercussions that insufficient policy responses to social exclusion can have on radicalisation, which impacts upon public security and the human rights of citizens.

“A point in time has come at which it is indispensable to respond to the threats to human rights and fundamental freedoms by enforcing the co-operation between authorities at all levels, exchanging best practices and assessing the outcomes of implemented actions in order to pursue a common strategy to enhance inclusion and make human rights a reality in Europe’s cities and regions,” concluded Congress members in their declaration.

[Text of the declaration](#)

[File on the Forum “Focusing on human rights”](#)

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: Jean-Claude Frécon (France, SOC), President of the Chamber of Local Authorities: Anders Knappe (Sweden, EPP/CCE), President of the Chamber of Regions: Gudrun Mosler-Törnström (Austria, SOC)

Political Groups: Socialist Group (SOC), Group of the European People’s Party – Christian Democrats (EPP/CD), Independent and Liberal Democrat Group (ILDG), European Conservatives & Reformists Group (ECR)