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The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe: Launching a new project on promoting local democracy in Ukraine

Kyiv, 15.09.2015 - The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe is launching a new project to promote local democracy in Ukraine. The aim is to improve the implementation of democratic principles through development of the institutional and leadership capacities of local elected authorities, and by disseminating nation-wide best practices of local democracy. This project will be implemented in the framework of the 2015-2017 Council of Europe Action Plan for Ukraine.

Following the changes in the country that arose in 2014, this project aims to support the new landscape of local authorities, particularly mayors and councillors to be elected in 2015. The project seeks to build up common ground, at local and regional level, for reforms undertaken by central authorities.

The Congress will propose comprehensive and tailor-made support to local elected representatives in different settings, in order to improve their co-operation, management and communication skills, when engaging with citizens.

For the first activity of the project, the Congress is organising a regional training seminar for young local leaders in Kyiv (Ukraine), on 15-17 September 2015. The seminar aims to provide a platform for exchange of young Ukrainian political leaders to familiarise themselves with European practices and to develop their leadership skills.

Young Ukrainians from Kyiv, Vynnytsya, Khmelnytsk and Rivne regions will meet with members of the Congress, and international and local experts to discuss: i) the principles of the European Charter of Local Self-Government, its Additional Protocol on the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority and their respective implementation in Ukraine, ii) campaigning and local elections in 2015 in Ukraine, iii) the situation with local and regional democracy in Ukraine, as well as transparency and civil participation in the decision-making process.

Ukraine joined the Council of Europe on 9 November 1995, ratified the European Charter of Local Self-Government on 11 September 1997 and its Additional Protocol on the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority on 2 September 2014. Countries which have ratified the Charter are bound by its provisions. The Charter imposes compliance with a minimum number of rights, and principles, which are the European bedrock of local self-government. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe ensures respect for these principles.

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The Congress has two chambers, the Chamber of Local Authorities and the Chamber of Regions. It brings together 324 full and 324 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)