

Press Release

Congress of Local and Regional Authorities

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Jean-Claude van Cauwenberghe: "The reference framework is an interesting step for regional democracy"

Strasbourg, 24.04.2009 - At its meeting from 22 to 24 April, the European Committee on Local and Regional Democracy (CDLR) decided to prepare a reference framework on regional democracy in close co-operation with the Congress. This new framework will be based on the Helsinki principles on regional self-government, approved by the European Ministers responsible for Local and Regional Government in 2002, and on the 2004 recommendation of the Committee of Ministers on territorial reforms and the draft Charter of Regional Democracy, adopted by the Congress in 2008.

The main objective of this framework which should be approved as a resolution by the European Ministers responsible for Local and Regional Government at their Conference in Utrecht (Netherlands) in November 2009 will be to guide institutional reforms at regional level, also with regard to the establishment of new regions. It will include procedural aspects with regard to undertaking regional reforms.

"I welcome this decision" said Jean-Claude van Cauwenberghe (Belgium, SOC), Congress Rapporteur on regionalisation. "The Congress firmly believes that, in monitoring the state of local and regional democracy, it needs an instrument to help it assess the level of regional democracy in Europe. In the meantime, the CDLR has undertaken an interesting step in the right direction.

"Beyond this positive step, we consider it important for the future, to offer not only regional authorities but also governments a reference text in the form of a European convention similar to the European Charter of Local Self-Government", he stressed.

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: Yavuz Milden (Turkey, EPP/CD), President of the Chamber of Regions: Ludmila Sfîrloaga (Romania, SOC),

President of the Chamber of Local Authorities: Ian Micallef (Malta, EPP/CD).

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