

Media Advisory

Congress of Local and Regional Authorities

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Strasbourg, 19.05.2009

Monitoring of regional democracy in Switzerland

Dates : from 25 to 27 May 2009

Location : Bern and Lausanne (Switzerland)

Description : A monitoring mission to assess the situation of regional democracy in Switzerland will be carried out by the Council of Europe Congress of Local and Regional Authorities from 25 to 27 May. This will be the first monitoring visit to this country since it ratified the European Charter of Local Self-Government in 2005.

The Congress rapporteur Jean-Claude Van Cauwenberghe (Belgium, SOC) will examine the distribution of competences between the federal bodies, cantons and local authorities as well as the state of the cantons' financial autonomy. Other aspects of this monitoring mission include the way that cantons are consulted on federal draft laws and the mechanisms set up by the Federal Government to control their decisions.

Meetings have been scheduled with representatives of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, the Council of States (High Chamber of the Swiss Parliament), the Bern Canton, the Federal Department of Justice and Police and the Federal Department of Finances.

In Lausanne the delegation will meet with representatives of the Vaud Canton.

The report of this monitoring mission will be submitted to the Congress Institutional Committee, following which the Congress will examine it in plenary.

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 Mildon (Turkey, EPP/CD), President of the Chamber of Regions: Ludmila Sfirloaga (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).