

Press Release

Congress of Local and Regional Authorities

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Residence-based citizenship: Conference on integrating foreign residents into local public life

Strasbourg, 12.10.2010 – The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, the City of Strasbourg and its Council of Foreign Residents as well as the Strasbourg Club are organising an international conference on "Integrating foreign residents into local public life: challenges and prospects", in Strasbourg (France) on 15 and 16 October 2010.

European towns and cities, where citizens of all backgrounds and origins live side by side, are often affected by tensions between neighbourhoods, population groups, communities and individuals. This makes it vital to cultivate consideration for and understanding and acceptance of other groups, as key factors in establishing a sense of belonging through residence-based citizenship. In towns and cities which are home to people of the widest range of cultures, foreign residents must be able to be fully-fledged participants in the life of their communities.

The conference will bring together municipalities that have already established foreign residents' councils, that are actively pursuing local integration and intercultural relations' policies, and that are willing to join these efforts. It will provide a forum to discuss different forms of citizens' participation, compare the functioning of foreign residents' councils and identify common problems and solutions. European experts and national and international delegations, including delegations from foreign residents' consultative councils in France, will take part in this event.

Council of Europe Secretary General Thorbjørn Jagland, acting President of the Congress Ian Micallef, First Deputy Mayor of Strasbourg Robert Herrmann and Anne-Pernelle Richardort, Deputy Mayor in charge of Citizenship Affairs and the Council of Foreign Residents, will open the conference on Friday 15 October at 10 am in Room 1 of the Palais de l'Europe in Strasbourg (France).

The first day of the conference will be devoted to the European legal framework for foreign residents' participation, experience-sharing as well as testimonies of municipalities participating in the European network of the Cities for Local Integration Policy (CLIP) and the "Intercultural Cities" project of the Council of Europe and the European Commission. The Strasbourg Club will also present its work on Roma integration. The day of 16 October will focus on the launching of the first-ever network of foreign residents' consultative councils of French cities.

Among the speakers are Deputy Mayor of Brussels Ahmed El Ktibi (Belgium), Deputy Mayor of Zagreb Jelena Pavičić Vukičević (Croatia), Deputy Mayor of Reggio Emilia Franco Corradini (Italy), Deputy Mayor of San Lazzaro Raymond Dassi (Italy), Stuttgart Commissioner for Integration Gari Pavkovic (Germany), Neuchâtel Cantonal Commissioner for Foreign Nationals Thomas Facchinetti (Switzerland), and Council of Europe Coordinator on Roma issues Henry Scicluna.

The conference is open to the press, and will be broadcast live on the Internet at www.coe.int and www.coe.int/congress.

For more information: www.coe.int/congress.
Special file: www.coe.int/foreign-residents

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).