

# Press Release

## Congress of Local and Regional Authorities

Communication Division

Ref: 758a10

Tel. +33 (0)3 90 21 52 40

Fax +33 (0)3 88 41 27 51

Internet: [www.coe.int/congress](http://www.coe.int/congress)

e-mail: [congress.com@coe.int](mailto:congress.com@coe.int)



### 47 member States

Albania  
Andorra  
Armenia  
Austria  
Azerbaijan  
Belgium  
Bosnia and Herzegovina  
Bulgaria  
Croatia  
Cyprus  
Czech Republic  
Denmark  
Estonia  
Finland  
France  
Georgia  
Germany  
Greece  
Hungary  
Iceland  
Ireland  
Italy  
Latvia  
Liechtenstein  
Lithuania  
Luxembourg  
Malta  
Moldova  
Monaco  
Montenegro  
Netherlands  
Norway  
Poland  
Portugal  
Romania  
Russia  
San Marino  
Serbia  
Slovakia  
Slovenia  
Spain  
Sweden  
Switzerland  
"The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"  
Turkey  
Ukraine  
United Kingdom

## 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the European Charter of Local Self-Government: "The Charter has become the benchmark treaty for local democracy in Europe" says Ian Micallef

Strasbourg, 15.10.2010 - The recognition of local democracy by the member states of the Council of Europe led to the drafting of the European Charter of Local Self-Government. This convention, the first and only legally binding international treaty safeguarding the rights of local authorities and their elected representatives, was opened for signature on 15 October 1985.

"The European Charter of Local Self-Government, which is today celebrating its 25th anniversary, has become a fundamental benchmark treaty for promoting grassroots democracy", said Ian Micallef, Acting President of the Congress. "It is an integral part of the overall system for upholding and protecting democracy in Council of Europe member states. And, through its regular monitoring of the application of the Charter, our Congress contributes, at local and regional level, to the fundamental objectives of the organisation".

"The Additional Protocol on the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority, which was adopted in 2009, supplements the provisions of the Charter. The Congress firmly believes that this right must be granted to all local residents, irrespective of whether or not they are members of the European Union. If we foster and encourage the democratic participation of all local residents, we will succeed in creating cohesive and sustainable communities" he said at the Conference on integrating foreign residents into local public life that is being held today in Strasbourg (France), in conjunction with the City of Strasbourg, its Foreign Residents' Council, and the Strasbourg Club.

"We also welcome the fact that Andorra is due to sign the European Charter of Local Self-Government at the next session of the Congress in October, meaning that it will soon ratify the Charter. This decision is further proof of the vitality and relevance of this legal instrument" said Ian Micallef. "We invite Monaco and San Marino to sign the Charter and thus join us in building Europe on the firm basis of genuine grassroots democracy".

\*\*\*

*The European Charter of Local Self-Government requires that the principle of local self-government be embedded in a country's domestic law or Constitution in order to guarantee its effective implementation. It lays down the principles of the democratic functioning of communities and is the first treaty to establish the principle of the transfer of competences and the corresponding financial resources to local communities. This principle, known as the subsidiarity principle, allows for the decentralisation of power to the grassroots level. The Charter entered into force on 1 September 1988 and has, to date, been ratified by 44 of the 47 Council of Europe member states.*

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 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).