

Media Advisory

Congress of Local and Regional Authorities

Communication Division

Ref: MA136a10

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

Fax +33 (0)3 88 41 27 51

Internet: www.coe.int/congress

e-mail: congress.com@coe.int



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26.11.2010

Monitoring of local and regional democracy in Finland

Dates: from 30 November 2010 to 3 December 2010

Location: Helsinki, Mariehamn, Kouvola, Finland

Description: The Council of Europe Congress of Local and Regional Authorities will carry out a general monitoring mission to assess the state of local and regional democracy in Finland. This visit is part of the Congress' procedure for monitoring the implementation of the European Charter of Local Self-Government, which Finland ratified in 1991.

Congress Rapporteurs Pia Bosch I Codola (Spain, SOC) and Jean-Louis Testud (France, EPP/CD) will meet Minister for Public Administration and Local Authorities Tapani Tölli, President of "Helsinki Executive Board" and Head of the Finnish Delegation to the Congress Risto Rautava and Mayor of Helsinki Jussi Pajunen.

In the Finnish Parliament, the delegation will meet Antti Rantakangas, Chair of the Assembly's Committee on Administration, Hannes Manninen, Chair of the Committee on Finance, and Matti Ahde, Chair of the Committee on Audit.

The Rapporteurs will hold meetings with Pekka Hallberg, President of the Supreme Administrative Court, Mikko Puumalainen, Deputy Ombudsman, as well as with Rakel Hiltunen, President of the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities (AFLRA), Alpo Jokelainen, Mayor of Kainuu, and Ossi Savolainen, Mayor of Uusimaa.

Several meetings are also scheduled during the delegation's visit of the Åland Islands (Mariehamn), notably with Peter Lindbäck, Governor of Åland, Roger Eriksson, Minister of Administration and EU-affairs, Roger Nordlund, Speaker of Ålands Lagting, and Sia Spiliopoulou Åkermark, Director of the Åland Islands Peace Institute.

Following the visit, a report will be submitted to the Congress' Monitoring Committee.

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The Congress' latest recommendation on the situation of regional democracy in Finland was adopted in June 1999. In February 2008, the Congress Bureau had an exchange of views with Mari Kiviniemi, Minister of Public Administration and Local Authorities of Finland, on matters concerning local self-government. The Minister addressed the plenary session of the Congress in May that year.

Contact in Helsinki:

Muriel Grimmeissen, Secretariat of the Congress, mobile: +33 6 50 39 29 16

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: Keith Whitmore (United Kingdom, ILDG), President of the Chamber of Regions: Herwig van Staa (Austria, EPP/CD), President of the Chamber of Local Authorities: Jean-Claude Frécon (France, SOC) Political Groups: Socialist Group (SOC), Group of the European People's Party – Christian Democrats (EPP/CD), Independent and Liberal Democrat Group (ILDG).