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## **Congress expresses condolences and solidarity after violent earthquake in Turkey**

Strasbourg, 24.10 2011. – Following yesterday's violent earthquake in eastern Turkey, which left hundreds dead and thousands injured, the President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, Keith Whitmore, has voiced the solidarity of the Congress with the stricken communities.

"In this terrible ordeal for Turkey, I would like to convey, on behalf of the Congress, my deepest condolences to the victims' families and to the authorities and the Turkish people as a whole", he said

"As an assembly of local and regional elected representatives, the Congress expresses its profound solidarity with the municipalities hit by this disaster, particularly with the cities of Erzurum and Van. This disaster reminds us once again of the crucial importance of making our cities and regions natural disaster-resilient", he added.

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).