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## **Russia: Keith Whitmore welcomes plans to reintroduce direct elections of regional governors**

Strasbourg, 18 January 2012 – The President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, Keith Whitmore has welcomed the draft legislation on the election of regional governors, presented by Russian President Dmitry Medvedev on 16 January 2012 to the State Duma. This bill provides for the restoration of direct elections of regional governors, currently de facto appointed by the Head of State.

"The Congress has always worked to support the strengthening of regional democracy in Russia. This measure would be an essential step for restoring the level of regional democracy that the Russian Federation enjoyed prior to 2004. I call on the Duma to support the proposal of President Medvedev and adopt this legislation", stated Keith Whitmore.

The Congress reiterated the need for the reintroduction of direct elections for regional governors in 2010 as part of its monitoring process of the implementation of the European Charter of Local Self-Government.

### [Recommendation \(297\) 2010](#) – Local and Regional Democracy in the Russian Federation

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).