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Local and regional democracy in Denmark

Strasbourg, 31 October 2013 – The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, convened in Strasbourg (France), examined a report on the state of local democracy in Denmark further to a monitoring visit made to the country in October 2012.

The report, presented by Julia COSTA, Portugal (L, EPP/CCE) and Jean-Pierre LIOUVILLE, France (R, SOC) takes account of advances since the latest Recommendation 164 of the Congress in 2005. The rapporteurs emphasise with satisfaction that local democracy in Denmark is expressed by a “culture of the European Charter of Local Self-Government” which has only been confirmed by a major reform of local authorities in 2007.

“This seems to me a case of good practices which are exportable everywhere in Europe whatever the method of incorporating the Charter into the domestic legal systems,” Julia Costa said with reference to three examples of the reform: the procedure used for mergers of municipalities, the consultation of local authorities in planning or decision-making processes, and citizens’ participation in local public affairs in Denmark.

Nonetheless, the Congress delegation recommends clearly defining the areas of responsibility of local authorities, allocating adequate financial resources, and improving procedures for financial equalisation among the municipalities.

“Where the regions are concerned, we are not convinced that they have sufficient autonomy to be able to meet the challenges awaiting them in the future, owing to their limited competences and their inability to raise taxes or to command any other financial resources than state contributions,” Jean-Pierre LIOUVILLE explained, calling on the authorities to address the issues and take steps to rectify this aspect.

Finally, the rapporteurs encourage the Danish authorities to sign and ratify the Additional Protocol to the European Charter of Local Self-Government on the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority (CETS No. 207).

[Report CG\(25\)12PROV](#)

[Video of the debate](#)

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: Herwig Van Staa (Austria, EPP/DC), President of the Chamber of Regions: Nataliya Romanova (Ukraine, IDLG), 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), European Conservatives & Reformists Group (ECR)