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Congress President welcomes new Tunisian Constitution's recognition of local democracy

Strasbourg, 14 February 2014 – Herwig van Staa, President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, welcomed the promulgation on 27 January of the new Constitution of the Tunisian Republic, emphasising that the Constitution represented a great step forward in the development of democracy in the country, and a major hope for all countries in the region.

He especially commended the high importance attached by the new Tunisian Constitution to local government, comprising municipalities, regions and districts.

Noting that the Constitution laid down the broad policy directions in respect of local and regional democracy, he expressed the determination of the Congress to carry on its co-operation with the Tunisian authorities with a view to the speedy adoption of the implementing laws for these main principles.

"The Congress has worked with the Venice Commission on the questions relating to local and regional democracy since the formation in 2011 of the National Constituent Assembly. We are now ready to deepen our ties with the newly elected local and regional authorities in Tunisia – particularly in the preparation of the local electoral legislation, in the observation of local and/or regional elections, and in training and support for elected representatives," said the President.

"The Congress will help strengthen co-operation with Tunisia, specifically by way of the future "Partner for Local Democracy" status which will be open to local and regional authorities of the states in the Council of Europe neighbourhood," he added.

The Congress Bureau convened on 10 February in Strasbourg (France) adopted the following declaration on the adoption of the new Constitution:

[Full text of the Declaration](#)

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)