



T +33(0)390214895

[www.coe.int/congress](http://www.coe.int/congress)

[congress.web@coe.int](mailto:congress.web@coe.int)

Ref. CG-PR 050 (2014)

## **The Council of Europe Congress adopts partner for local democracy status**

Strasbourg, 16.10.2014 – On 16 October 2014, at their 27th Session, the members of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe adopted a resolution introducing "partner for local democracy" status open to local elected representatives in neighbouring non-member states of the Council of Europe.

Drawing on the "partner for democracy" status devised by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, which has already been granted to Morocco, Palestine and Kyrgyzstan, this new status will allow such co-operation to be developed at the level of local and regional authorities, with a view to accompanying democratic reform in Europe's neighbouring regions, notably the Southern Mediterranean region.

The resolution stipulates that "partner for local democracy" status will be granted upon a joint request by the government of the requesting state and by one or more associations of local and/or regional elected representatives in that state. "This status commits the authorities to uphold, respect and promote at all levels of government the values and principles of the Council of Europe. It will constitute a formal framework for us to promote the initiation of a devolution process" said Jean-Claude Frécon, (France, SOC), rapporteur and newly elected President of the Congress.

Speaking on behalf of the Moroccan government during the debate, Hassan Bouhriz, deputy mayor of Tangiers and member of the House of Representatives and, underlined the importance of this co-operation with Europe for his country. "The democratic choice made by Morocco and by all of the country's political parties is an irreversible decision. It entails not only enjoyment of citizenship rights through properly conducted elections, but also the choice of the area in which these rights are exercised" he said. He also presented the next stages in Morocco's regionalisation project, which should be debated and adopted in 2015.

The Moroccan authorities should make a formal request to be granted "partner for local democracy" status in early 2015.

- [Report CG\(27\)9](#)
- [Video of the debate](#)
- [MediaBox Interview by Hassan Bouhriz](#)
- [File 27th Session](#)

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: Jean-Claude Frécon (France, SOC), President of the Chamber of Local Authorities: Anders Knappe (Sweden, EPP/CCE), President of the Chamber of Regions: Gudrun Mosler-Törnström (Austria, 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)