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Ref. CG-PR 051 (2014)

Monitoring of local and regional democracy in Belgium

Strasbourg, 16.10.2014 – The Congress of Local and Regional of the Council of Europe examined a report on the situation of local and regional democracy in Belgium on 15 October 2014. The report was compiled after two monitoring visits carried out by Congress rapporteurs Henrik HAMMAR (Sweden, EPP/CCE) and Urs WÜTHRICH-PELLOLI (Switzerland, SOC), the first to Brussels and Tervueren on 8 and 9 October 2013 and the second to Brussels from 4 to 6 February 2014.

During those visits, the rapporteurs examined follow-up to the commitments entered into by Belgium when ratifying the European Charter of Local Self-government in 2004, as well as the Sixth State Reform adopted in December 2013 by the two chambers of the Belgian Parliament.

The recommendation adopted underlines that the constitutional and legislative foundations of self-government are fully complied with throughout the country and that the scope of local self-government is generally respected. The Congress also welcomes the entry into force of the Sixth State Reform as well as the introduction in 2006 of a procedure for the automatic *de jure* appointment of burgomasters elected in the Walloon Region. Finally, the rapporteurs welcome the political will expressed by the three regions to commit to the provisions of the Charter that have not yet been ratified.

The Belgian authorities are invited to improve the procedure for consulting the communities and regions, in particular in the case of local authorities in the Walloon Region and the Brussels-Capital Region. The community and regional authorities are also urged to pay particular attention to the financial situation of municipalities and provinces, ensuring that they have diversified and adequate resources.

Finally, the Belgian authorities are asked to consider ratifying 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) and the Additional Protocol to the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities (ETS no. 159).

Belgium ratified the European Charter of Local Self-Government on 25 August 2004 and signed 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) on 16 November 2009. The countries having ratified the Charter are bound by its provisions. The convention imposes respect for a minimum core of principles that form the first European foundation for local self-government. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe ensures that those principles are respected.

[Report CG\(27\)7](#)
[File for 27th Session](#)
[European Charter of Local Self-Government](#)

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.

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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)