



T +33(0)390214895

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Congress President condemns Russia-South Ossetia "agreement"

Strasbourg, 24 March 2015 - Following the Russian Federation's signature of the so-called "treaty on alliance and integration" with the South Ossetia region in Georgia, the President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, Jean-Claude Frécon, made the following statement on the fringes of the Congress session in Strasbourg (France):

"I deeply deplore this provocative initiative: one year after illegally annexing Crimea and Sevastopol and less than six months after signing a similar "treaty" with Abkhazia, another Georgian region, the Russian Federation is committing a further transgression by signing a text which, once again, gravely violates the territorial integrity and sovereignty of a Council of Europe member State and all the international commitments entered into by Russia when joining the Council of Europe.

This initiative threatens the stability of an entire region of Europe and is yet another example of Russian interference on the territory of its neighbours. We ask Russia to definitively desist from exerting this kind of pressure on its neighbours."

The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe had already spoken out on 3 December 2014 to criticise the signing of a "treaty" with Abkhazia, a region of Georgia.

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)