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29th Session of the Congress to focus on combating radicalisation, refugees and migrants, youth participation and local and regional democracy in Europe

Strasbourg, 12.10.2015 – Members of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe will meet in Strasbourg, France, from 20 to 22 October 2015 for their 29th session, under this year's heading of "Local responses to human rights challenges – migration, discrimination, social inclusion".

The Congress will discuss guidelines for local and regional authorities on preventing radicalisation at grassroots level. This follows on from the adoption in March 2015 of a [resolution and a recommendation on local and regional authorities' role in this area](#). Against the background of the current crisis, Congress members will also discuss means of fighting the increasing poverty of women and children's rights in times of austerity.

A debate on "Refugee and migrant crisis: what is the role of local and regional authorities?" is to be held on Wednesday 21 October, with the mayors of Gaziantep, Sanliurfa Nihat Ciftci (Turkey), Calais, Natacha Bouchart (France), and Kos, Giorgios Kyritsis (Greece), as well as with the First Vice-President of the Conference of Ministers of the Interior of Germany, Klaus Bouillon. A debate on "Regional and minority languages in Europe: recent developments, challenges and good practices" will be held on the same day.

The session will see the participation of youth delegates aged 16 to 30 who will be invited to sit alongside Congress members. Youth participation and active citizenship will be the focus of several debates, in particular on "Fostering active citizenship by building partnerships with civil society", "Creating a lingua franca for local and regional authorities and young people" and "Voting at 16 and consequences on youth participation at local and regional level".

In addition, the Congress will hold debates on the situation of local democracy in Luxembourg – in the presence of Dan Kersch, Minister of the Interior, Minister for Public Services and Administrative Reform – and Montenegro, following monitoring visits to those countries in 2015. It will further consider the reports concerning the observation of the elections in Albania (21 June 2015) and the Republic of Moldova (14 June 2015), as well as the election of the Governor (Bashkan) and the partial elections to the Popular Assembly of the Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia, Republic of Moldova (22 March 2015).

Several texts will be debated for adoption, in particular concerning "New forms of local governance", "Trends in regionalisation in the Council of Europe member states", "News E-tools: game changer for local and regional politicians" and "Conditions of office of local and regional elected representatives".

The 5th Congress Dosta! Prize for municipalities will be awarded to four winning towns for their projects promoting Roma integration.

Thorbjørn Jagland, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Igor Crnadak, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, on behalf of the Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers, and Anne Brasseur, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, will address Congress members.

Press briefing: Congress President Jean-Claude Frécon will meet the press on Tuesday 20 October 2015 at 10 am (Room 14, Palais de l'Europe) – *French and English interpretation*.

Live webcast of debates: All the debates will be [webcast live](#) from Tuesday 20 October at 11 am.

TV / Videos: Videos in broadcast quality of the debates and speeches may be [downloaded](#) for free around two hours after delivery. For other requests, please contact the Council of Europe's Audiovisual Department, Tel: +33 3 88 41 25 64 (before the session); +33 3 88 41 35 00 (during the session).

Photos: Professional quality photos may be [downloaded](#) for free online and may be used copyright-free with the caption ©Council of Europe.

Accreditation: Directorate of Communication, accreditation@coe.int.

For further information: Please consult the Congress [website](#) and the [29th session](#) file.

Contact: Planning, Co-ordination and Institutional Communication Unit – congress.web@coe.int

The Congress has two chambers, the Chamber of Local Authorities and the Chamber of Regions. It brings together 324 full and 324 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)