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## **Local and regional authorities' responses to the economic crisis to be the focus of debates at Congress autumn session**

Strasbourg, 22.10.2013 – The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe is to hold its 25th session in Strasbourg (France) from 29 to 31 October 2013. Under this year's heading of "Europe in crisis – the challenges for local and regional democracy", the session will focus, in particular, on possible local and regional responses to the economic crisis and challenges in the field of social cohesion.

Apart from a specific debate on "Local and regional authorities responding to the economic crisis", other debates will look at "Integration through self-employment: promoting migrant entrepreneurship in European municipalities", "Migrants' access to regional labour markets" and "Regionalisation and devolution in Europe in a context of economic crisis – recent developments". In this context, the Presidents of the Parliamentary Assembly and of the Congress of the Council of Europe signed a joint declaration on "Facing the economic crisis: recovery requires reinforced co-operation between all levels of government".

The session will also include a special event concerning the European Charter of Local Self-Government, which now covers all 47 member states of the Council of Europe. This benchmark international treaty is the pillar for the Congress' work in monitoring the situation of local democracy in Europe. And there are several monitoring reports on the session agenda, concerning Ireland, Hungary, Ukraine, Albania and Denmark, as well as a report on the election of the members of the Avagani (Assembly) of the city of Yerevan and another on the local elections in "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia".

Congress members will also debate "Prospects for effective transfrontier co-operation in Europe", "Regions and territories with special status in Europe" and ways of "fighting political extremism at local and regional level".

During the session, the 4th Congress Dosta! Prize for municipalities will be awarded to three local authorities that have made a mark through creative and innovative work to combat anti-Gypsyism and promote the inclusion of Roma in political and social life.

Prominent speakers invited to the session include Armen Gevorgyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Territorial Administration of Armenia, Liviu Nicolae Dragnea, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Administration and Regional Development of Romania, Jose Herrera, Parliamentary Secretary for Culture and Local Government of Malta, Jean-Claude Mignon, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, and Thorbjørn Jagland, Secretary General of the Council of Europe.

### **Press briefing:**

Congress President Herwig van Staa will meet the press on Tuesday 29 October 2013 at 10.20 am (Room 14 – Palais de l'Europe, Strasbourg, France)

[File "25<sup>th</sup> Session"](#)

[Agenda](#)

[Documents](#)

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)

