

Press Release

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Setting up of a Council of Europe centre in St Petersburg among the highlights of the Congress session

Strasbourg, 11.05.2006 – The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe will hold its plenary session from 30 May to 1 June in Strasbourg.

The session begins with the renewal of the delegations and elections for the posts of President of the Congress and Presidents of the chambers, Vice-presidents and Chairs of the statutory committees.

The members of the Congress will review the recent initiatives of the Congress. The setting up of a Council of Europe centre for interregional and transfrontier cooperation in Saint Petersburg will be debated in the presence of Valentina Matvienko, governor of St Petersburg, and Sergey Mironov, Speaker of the Federation Council (upper chamber of the Russian Parliament) will speak on Thursday 1 June. Reports on the creation of new types of Euroregions such as the Adriatic Euroregion and the Black Sea Euroregion will also be considered.

The members will also assess the state of regionalisation in Europe, local democracy in Liechtenstein, Moldova and Cyprus, local finance in the Netherlands and local and regional democracy in Turkey and the countries of the South Caucasus.

They will examine reports on the local elections in Ukraine on 26 March 2006 and on the Referendum on self-determination for Montenegro (Serbia & Montenegro) on 21 May 2006.

Finally, they will debate urban security, access for migrants to social rights and the management of water and waste. The presentation of a report on combating trafficking in human beings will be followed by the signing of a declaration.

The guests who are to address the Congress include Terry Davis, Council of Europe Secretary General, Thomas Hammarberg, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Michel Delebarre, President of the European Union's Committee of the Regions and deputy mayor of Dunkirk, and Walter Schmied, Chairman of the Parliamentary Assembly Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs.

The new Congress President will give a **press conference on Tuesday 30 May at 2.30 pm in room 9** (Palais de l'Europe)

A **press briefing** will be given by the Congress President and the Presidents of the chambers at **12 noon on Thursday 1 June in room 1** (Palais de l'Europe).

For more information, see http://www.coe.int/t/congress/3-sessions/1-plenary-sessions/13session-pleniére_EN.asp

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