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Ref. 258(2011)

Malta launches initiative to lift reservations to the Congress Charter of Local Self-Government

Strasbourg, 24.03.2011 – The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe adopted yesterday, in the framework of its [20th Session](#) in Strasbourg, a report and recommendation on the situation of local democracy in Malta. The report follows the Congress monitoring visit to the country last summer and welcomes the local government reform undertaken by Malta in the last three years, in particular, the initiative to lift reservations to the Charter of Local Self-Government.

According to Congress Rapporteur, Emil Calota, Romania (L, SOC), the amended 2009 Local Councils Act met most of Malta's obligations under the Charter. Malta's reservations on four paragraphs of the Charter, under Article 7 (financial compensation of local elected representatives) and under Article 9 (financial resources of local authorities), were lifted. This is a positive step in the current campaign of the Congress to promote a "100% Charter" - a Charter without reservations - amongst member countries.

Despite these improvements, the Congress notes in its report that there are still areas of concern with regard to territorial democracy in Malta, such as the limitations on local authorities' responsibilities and the decrease in local council finances.

Emil Calota thinks that local authorities in Malta should have the opportunity to raise their own taxes – as is the case for other Council of Europe member countries. "In our recommendation we suggest that the Maltese authorities overcome objections to local taxes and should consider, as a first step, the possibility of transferring some state taxes to local authorities. When this step is taken, Malta would be in a position to lift the last remaining reservation: Article 9 paragraph 3.. After almost 20 years of local self-government in Malta, local councils should be given greater responsibilities as well as adequate resources.", the Congress Rapporteur concluded.

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: Keith Whitmore (United Kingdom, ILDG), President of the Chamber of Regions: Herwig van Staa (Austria, EPP/CD), President of the Chamber of Local Authorities: Jean-Paul 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).