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Congress monitoring visit in Lithuania : Local self government, a subject of controversy

Strasbourg, 9 June 2011 - «The Lithuanian legislation on local self government is broadly in line with the European Charter on Local Self Government» said Gudrun MOSLER-TÖRNSTRÖM and Irene LOIZIDOU, co-rapporteurs respectively on regional and local democracy, during the second monitoring visit to the country. It appears however that in practice, the implementation of some provisions of the Charter, in particular those regarding the delegation of competences and the corresponding transfer of funds, give rise to some discussion.

In a country which has some of the largest territorial municipalities in Europe, there has been a debate around a number of particular issues. These include: the direct election of mayors by residents - which presents both political and constitutional obstacles, the transfer of external audit functions in respect of each local authority to the State, and whether the Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania (ALAL) can take judicial action on behalf of local governments to defend their rights.

The delegation welcomes the information, given by the Minister of the Interior, that Lithuania is preparing to ratify, in the near future, the [Additional Protocol to the European Charter of Local Self-Government on the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority](#) (STE 207). The co-rapporteurs hope that this initiative can be seen as a positive move in favour of a more effective local government system.

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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.

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