

## **Recommendation 170<sup>1</sup> on intercultural and inter-faith dialogue: initiatives and responsibilities of local authorities**

### **The Congress, bearing in mind the proposal of the Chamber of Local Authorities,**

1. Having examined the report on "intercultural and inter-faith dialogue: initiatives and responsibilities of local authorities" presented by Mary Hunt (United Kingdom, ILDG) and Brith Fäldt (Sweden, SOC) on behalf of the Chamber's Committee on Culture and Education and Resolution 202 (2005) on the same subject which proposes a whole series of measures to be taken locally in this area;

#### **2. Recalling:**

a. Congress Recommendation 33 (1997) on "Local democracy embassies: instruments for peace and democracy in Europe", which draws attention to the participation in the work of the Local Democracy Agencies of partner towns, regions and NGOs, which have helped to promote democratic security by encouraging dialogue between the various sections of the population, tolerance, peaceful coexistence and the development or preservation of local democracy;

b. Congress Recommendation 117 (2002) on "Promoting transfrontier co-operation: an important factor of democratic stability in Europe";

c. Congress Recommendation 134 (2003) on "Tackling terrorism - the role and responsibilities of local authorities", which highlights the responsibilities of local authorities in promoting dialogue between cultures and religions;

d. Congress Recommendation 153 (2004) on "A pact for the integration of people of immigrant origin in Europe's towns, cities and regions";

e. Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1687 (2004) on "Combating terrorism through culture", which suggests, among other things, including the cultural dimension in the Council of Europe's work on countering terrorism;

#### **3. Having taken note of:**

a. the Declaration on "Intercultural Dialogue and Conflict Prevention" adopted by the European Ministers responsible for Cultural Affairs in Opatija, Croatia, on 22 October 2003, which stresses the need for co-operation among all tiers of government - local, regional and national - and for co-operation with civil society;

b. the Declaration on "Intercultural Education in the New European Context" adopted by the European Ministers of Education in Athens, Greece, on 12 November 2003;

4. Bearing in mind the work of the Congress, in particular the Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life and the handbook on local consultative bodies for foreign residents;

5. Taking account of the work of the Directorate General of Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport (DG IV), and in particular of the "Intercultural Dialogue and Conflict Prevention" project Action Plan (2002-2004) and work in the youth sector to foster an intercultural awareness and a culture of peace and dialogue among young people in order to prevent conflicts;

6. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers:

a. give priority to the matter in the coming years and support the work of the various relevant sectors of the Organisation that contribute to such dialogue, in particular:

i. the proposals resulting from the Directorate General of Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport (DG IV) "Intercultural Dialogue and Conflict Prevention" project and, in particular, efforts to identify, in conjunction with the Congress, good practice at local, regional and national level and the designation of an "Intercultural City of the Council of Europe" every year on the basis of the pilot project "Sarajevo, Intercultural City of the Council of Europe";

ii. DG IV's current work on impartial history teaching, the preparation and publication of history textbooks and the training of teachers in intercultural and inter-faith dialogue;

iii. youth exchange and youth encounter programmes designed to promote a culture of dialogue, peace and democratic participation among young people, including programmes for children at an early age;

iv. the dissemination of cultural and audiovisual works illustrating Europe's cultural and religious diversity and the reflection of this diversity in the media;

v. the work of the Directorate General of Social Cohesion (DG III) on combating social exclusion, improving people's financial situation and living conditions and promoting equal opportunities, especially among minority and vulnerable groups in disadvantaged urban areas;

b. Ask the relevant sectors of the Organisation to consider the possible further actions:

i. holding in the coming years a major European conference with representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly, the Congress, the Court of Human Rights, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance and all the other Council of Europe sectors concerned in order to:

- make European policy-makers and citizens aware of all that the mingling of cultures and civilisations and their mutual enrichment have contributed, and continue to contribute, to the building of Europe, its cultural heritage and its values;

- promote recognition for the equal dignity of the various cultural, religious, ethnic and national components of Europe, while condemning radical religious fanaticism and the corrupt use of cultural and regional identities for terrorist/subversive ends;

ii. devising, with the consent of the member states concerned, a special programme for the various parts of Europe that have recently suffered, or are still suffering from, conflicts between representatives of different cultural and/or religious communities in order to foster, among the citizens of those countries, a culture of dialogue, tolerance, negotiation and reconciliation;

iii. actively co-operate with the European Union in the context of the EU's plans to declare 2008 the Year of Intercultural Dialogue and Conflict Prevention, and widely publicise, on that occasion, all the Council of Europe's work designed to help promote such dialogue;

c. Invite the Steering Committee on Local and Regional Democracy (CDLR) to:

i. conduct a survey of practices in member states in respect of the consultation of foreign residents lawfully settled in those states on the occasion of referenda and other consultation processes at local level;

ii. disseminate widely the handbook on local consultative bodies for foreign residents published by the Congress;

d. Invite the governments of member states to:

i. support through voluntary contribution the Local Democracy Agency programmes which, in the countries of South-East Europe, actively promote intercultural and inter-faith dialogue and reconciliation of the communities;

ii. foster transfrontier co-operation, not least in the area of culture and formal and non-formal education, in order to consolidate a more open attitude to other cultures, neighbourly relations and conflict prevention;

iii. sign and ratify as soon as possible, if they have not already done so:

- the Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level (ETS 144);

- the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ETS 148);

- the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (ETS 157);
- the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities (ETS 106) and the Additional Protocols to it (ETS 159 and 169).

<sup>1</sup> Discussed and approved by the Chamber of Local Authorities on 31 May 2005 (see doc. CPL (12) 4, draft recommendation approved by M.Hunt (United Kingdom, L, ILDG) and B. Fäldt (Sweden, L, SOC), rapporteurs).

#### Related Documents

##### Meetings

- [12th Plenary Session of the Congress](#) / 31 May 2005

##### Other documents

- [THE CONGRESS - CPL \(12\) 4 Partie II E](#) / 10 May 2005 