

PRESS RELEASE

Local democracy in Luxembourg

On 21st of October 2015, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, a body representing local authorities in the Council of Europe, adopted a recommendation on the status of local democracy in Luxembourg. It is based on a report assessing Luxembourg's compliance, in legislation and practice, with the European Charter of Local Self-Government, a text of supra-legislative value in the Grand Duchy.

In the report's conclusions, the Congress "notes the Government's continuous commitment to strengthen efforts to simplify the administrative and procedural processes to benefit local level of governance [...]".

It notes, however, with concern, that difficulties in complying with the Charter continue to exist in Luxembourg. In order to remedy this, it invites the Luxembourg authorities to implement the following:

(a) "improve the dialogue between central government and the communes and SYVICOL on all matters concerning the communes by putting regular dialogue co-ordinated by central government on a more formal footing, so as to ensure that it becomes a permanent practice",

b) "review staff recruitment policy for communes so that they can determine for themselves the kind of internal administrative structures they wish to have, independently and without having to seek ministerial approval",

(c) "relax the administrative supervision of the communes' activities with a view to confining such control to verification of strict legality, and review the supervision of individuals, i.e. the hiring of local government officers, the dismissal of mayors or aldermen and the dissolution of the communal council",

(d) "to ensure that municipalities have sufficient resources to enable them to be able to exercise their powers taking into account the evolution of their core tasks and income disparities between communes".

The Association of Luxembourgish Cities and Municipalities very much welcomes these recommendations, completely in line with its own claims.

Thus, in his speech during the session of Congress where the report was presented, Mr Jean-Pierre Klein, President of the Luxembourg delegation to the Congress and 1st Vice-President of SYVICOL, recalled, on behalf of the entire delegation, the need for an easing of administrative supervision in general and the statutory entrenchment of the "principle of concomitant financing", i.e. the granting of new missions to municipalities must go hand in hand with the allocation of corresponding financial resources. He questioned the Minister of the Interior, Dan Kersch, who attended the session, on his intention to increase communal autonomy particularly in the area of personnel policy, an area where the current state

supervision is exaggerated, according to Congress. He also asked for the Minister's support with putting in place of a formalised consultation mechanism for municipalities, for example through an agreement between the Government and SYVICOL, to ensure better inclusion of municipal interests, particularly in the legislative and regulatory procedure.

The full text of the Congress' recommendation and the report on which it is based, video recording of the speech by Minister Dan Kersch, as well as other related documents are available on the Congress website: http://www.coe.int/t/congress_website.

SYVICOL is keeping itself at the complete disposal Government to discuss the short-term steps that could be undertaken to put the recommendations of Congress into practice and to strengthen municipal powers in the sense advocated by the European Charter of Self-Government.

Luxembourg, 23rd of October 2015