



Recommendation 262 (1960)¹

Charter of the European Conference of Local Authorities

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

Resolved to associate local authorities with the movement towards European integration at all stages and in every sphere of interest to them;

Paying a tribute to the admirable results achieved by the first three Sessions of the European Conference of Local Authorities;

Recognising the Conference as truly representative of all municipalities in member countries;

Conscious of the need to endow the Conference with a permanent Statute;

Having regard to the proceedings and decisions of the first Session of the Conference with regard to a Charter and, in particular, the adoption of that Charter by the Conference on 27th January 1960 by 94 votes to 1, with 8 abstentions,

Adopts and recommends that the Committee of Ministers adopt the Charter of the European Conference of Local Authorities, the text of which is as follows :

Having regard to [Resolution 76](#) adopted by the Consultative Assembly of the Council Europe on 14th October 1955, by which the Assembly decided to convene an annual conference to be attended by representatives of all the qualified national associations of the local authorities of member countries;

Having regard to [Resolution 28](#) adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 14th December 1957, in which the Committee of Ministers acknowledged the importance for the development of European co-operation of the participation of local authorities in the European institutions;

Having regard to [Resolution No. 9](#) adopted by the European Conference of Local Authorities on 31st October 1958, by which the Conference decided to adopt a Charter;

Having regard to the European Charter of Municipal Liberties proclaimed by the States-General of European Municipalities on 18th October 1953;

Whereas the organs of local government are the foundation of every democratic State, and human rights have found in local freedoms their surest and most ancient safeguard;

Whereas it is imperative that united Europe should be based on respect for its common civilisation and especially on the safeguard of local diversities and forms of self-government of which the local authorities are the custodians;

Whereas it is contrary to the sound organisation of democracy that the central authority should be entrusted with tasks that can better be carried out by the organs of local government which are in closer touch with the population;

1. Assembly debate on 28th September 1960 (19th Sitting) (see [Doc. 1165](#), Report of the Committee on Local Authorities). Text adopted by the Assembly on 28th September 1960 (19th Sitting).



Whereas no measure affecting the future of local communities should be taken by the central government without previous consultation of representatives of those communities;

Whereas the Conference of Local Authorities represents the local authorities of the member countries from which it derives and it is desirable that its representative character should be enshrined in a formal political document,

It is hereby decided as follows :

ARTICLE 1 -Nature, objectives and powers of the Conference

- a. The Conference shall ensure the representation, within the Council of Europe, of the local authorities of the member States. In addition, it may, in relation to other European institutions, ensure the representation of the local authorities in their member countries. It shall endeavour to bring about the participation by local authorities in the building of a united Europe and uphold local freedoms and prerogatives which constitute one of the foundations of a free Europe. Its primary aim is to keep the European institutions informed of the views of the local authorities on measures which are likely to have repercussions on local authorities or to involve the responsibility of local authorities towards the population and towards the Governments. It shall also keep the local authorities informed about the progress of European integration and seek their support for the ideal of European unity.
- b. The Conference may discuss any matters within its competence, as implied by the preceding subparagraphs, and any other matters referred to it for an opinion by the Council of Europe. In addition, it shall be empowered to discuss any questions brought before it by another European institution. It shall draw up opinions for European institutions on matters brought before it or coming within its general terms of reference. It may adopt resolutions on its work within the framework of this Charter and on any subject coming within the competence or affecting the common interest of the local authorities of the member countries.

ARTICLE 2 -Membership

- a. The Conference shall be composed of delegates from the local authorities in the member countries of the Council of Europe. All the national associations of local authorities and all national branches or sections of international associations of local authorities holding consultative status with the Council of Europe shall be empowered to appoint delegates.
- b. Each country shall be represented at the Conference by a number of delegates equal to the number of representatives of that country in the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe.
- c. Each country shall further appoint a number of substitute delegates equal to the number of full delegates.
- d. Full delegates and substitutes shall be appointed for the period of one session of the Conference and remain in that capacity until the opening of the following session.
- e. In the event of difficulty arising among the organisations of a particular country empowered to appoint delegations the Bureau of the Committee on Local Authorities shall allocate the seats assigned to that country.
- f. Should the national associations of local authorities in any country so decide, delegates for that country may be elected by members of its local authorities.
- g. Lists of delegates appointed to the Conference shall be sent to the Executive Secretary of the Conference at least one month before the opening date of each Session.
- h. The Standing Committee, after consulting the Bureau of the Committee on Local Authorities, may authorise any organisation that so requests to send observers without the right to vote to meetings of the Conference. The rights and privileges of such observers shall be fixed by the Standing Committee.

ARTICLE 3 -Sessions

- a. The Conference shall meet each year at dates to be fixed by the Committee on Local Authorities after hearing the proposals of the Standing Committee regarding the said dates, the agenda and the nomination of rapporteurs.
- b. The Council of Europe's Committee on Local Authorities may convene extraordinary sessions of the Conference.

- c. The Conference may be convened by the Standing Committee at the request of a European institution other than the Council of Europe.
- d. Sessions of the Conference shall be held at the headquarters of the Council of Europe unless otherwise decided by the Standing Committee in agreement with the Bureau of the Committee on Local Authorities or except when convened in accordance with paragraph (c) of this Article.

ARTICLE 4 -Restricted Sessions of the Conference

- a. Discussion may take place in restricted session of matters coming within the terms of reference of a European institution to which not all the countries represented at the Conference belong. Discussions shall be in restricted session whenever the Conference is required to deal with a matter referred to it by a European institution to which not all the member countries of the Council of Europe belong.
- b. In such cases, only delegates from countries belonging to the institution concerned shall have the right to take part in the discussion or to vote. Nevertheless, delegates from other countries shall have the right to attend as observers and submit their observations.
- c. Apart from the cases expressly mentioned in the Charter, the decision to discuss any matters in restricted session shall be taken by the Standing Committee.
- d. Opinions expressed following discussion in restricted session shall be published in such form as to make it clear that they express the views of the Conference in restricted session.

ARTICLE 5 -Committees

- a. At the beginning of each session, the Conference shall appoint the following committees :
 - 1. Political Committee,
 - 2. Economic and Social Committee,
 - 3. Committee on Local Finance,
 - 4. Cultural Committee,
 - 5. Housing and Town and Country Planning Committee.

In addition, the Conference may appoint ad hoc committees for specific purposes. The mandate of ad hoc committees shall terminate after the discussion of their reports by the Conference.

The committees shall examine all matters referred to them by the Conference or by the Bureau.

ARTICLE 6 -Standing Committee²

The Standing Committee shall be responsible for assuring the continuity of action of the Conference. For this purpose it may act on behalf of the Conference when necessary.

The Committee shall consist of the Chairman-in-office and his predecessor, the seven Vice-Presidents of the Conference, the Chairmen of the Committees and of such other members as shall be elected by the Conference, one per country, in order to ensure that each member State is represented.

ARTICLE 7 -Committee for liaison with the European Communities

- a. There shall be a Committee responsible for liaison between the Conference and the European Communities (European Coal and Steel Community, European Economic Community and European Atomic Energy Community). It shall be appointed in the manner laid down in the Rules of Procedure.
- b. This Committee shall make the necessary contacts, investigations or studies connected with the local effects of the activities of the Communities and, whenever it deems necessary, shall report to the Bureau, which shall decide whether to refer the matter to the Conference.

2. See [Resolution No. 21](#) of the 3rd Session of the Conference and the decision of the Committee on Local Authorities of 9th March 1960, modifying the Rules of Procedure of the Conference in pursuance of this Resolution ([Doc. AS/Loc \(11\) PV 7](#)). Since the Committee will then comprise members not holding presidential office, the Committee decided that the name of the Committee should be simplified and that it should henceforth be known as the "Standing Committee" instead of the "Standing Committee of Chairmen".

ARTICLE 8 -Finance

- a. The expenses of the Conference and its organs shall be borne in principle by the Budget of the Council of Europe.
- b. An estimate of the expenses of the Conference and its organs shall be prepared by the Standing Committee and submitted to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.
- c. The Standing Committee shall take any necessary decisions as to the utilisation of the credits made available for the Conference and its organs.
- d. Notwithstanding the above provisions, the Standing Committee may accept, and decide on the utilisation of, additional credits made available from other sources.

ARTICLE 9 -Secretariat of the Conference

- a. The Secretary-General of the Council of Europe shall be the Secretary-General of the Conference and shall, subject to the provisions of Article 8, provide such secretariat and other assistance as may be required by the Conference and its organs.
- b. Pursuant to the preceding paragraph, the Secretary-General, by agreement with the Standing Committee, shall appoint an official of the Secretariat-General to act as Executive Secretary of the Conference.
- c. The Executive Secretary of the Conference shall be Head of the Private Office of the President of the Conference and shall be responsible for the secretarial services of the Conference and its permanent committees.

ARTICLE 10 -Revision of the Charter and Rules of the Procedure of the Conference

- a. The Committee on Local Authorities and the Standing Committee may place proposals to amend the Charter before the Conference.
- b. Proposals to amend the Charter may be submitted to the Standing Committee by not less than ten delegates or to the Conference by not less than twenty.
- c. The Conference shall adopt its own Rules of Procedure on the proposal of the Committee on Local Authorities.