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22 April 2013

## The "backbone" to a successful regional democracy

### **Motion for a resolution**

tabled by Mr Luca VOLONTÈ and other members of the Assembly

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This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

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Direct democracy has proved to be one of the best instruments for good governance at local and regional level in a number of European countries.

When a region is constituted by aggregating existing smaller units or by reforming the existing territorial units, it should be in line with the criteria laid down by the Council of Europe and by the European Union.

In some Council of Europe member States the existing regions are not based on a realistic economic substructure or do not comply with the European Union required historical, cultural, linguistic, environmental criteria. Their boundaries are often artificial because their creation is resulting mainly from political considerations. Consequently, the population concerned suffers from disadvantages in their daily life and may see their cultural values affected. Such cases are creating economically but often also politically and ethnically based tensions.

Therefore a vital element, the so-called 'democratic backbone' principle, should be added to the already recognised criteria in order to provide the autochthonous population with the right to express their own views about the borders of 'their region'.

The Parliamentary Assembly should look into this matter and make concrete suggestions as to how and where the 'democratic backbone' principle should be applied to design or re-design a region.

*Signed (see overleaf)*



*Signed*<sup>1</sup>:

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1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe  
EDG: European Democrat Group  
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party  
SOC: Socialist Group