



**Recommendation 1770 (2006)<sup>1</sup>**

## **The promotion of local self-government along Council of Europe borders**

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly emphasises the importance of local democracy for better ensuring that the principles of democracy prevail in political institutions, and recalls that the Council of Europe has always made sure that true local democracy is established and respected in its member states. It was to this end that the European Charter of Local Self-Government (ETS No. 122) was adopted in 1985, and this has become the Council of Europe legal instrument of reference for safeguarding democratic local authorities.
2. The Assembly also emphasises the role of international co-operation at all levels, and particularly among local and regional authorities, which the Council of Europe also strives to promote, especially through the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities (ETS No. 106).
3. It notes that the Council of Europe has practically reached its geographical limits and that it has helped to put in place an extensive European area of democracy that is homogeneous, in terms of the major principles and values which it endeavours to safeguard and develop in accordance with its statutory objectives. A reminder of this fact was given in the Final Declaration issued at the 3rd Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe, which took place in Warsaw on 16 and 17 May 2005.
4. The Assembly considers that the Council of Europe and the continent of Europe, drawing confidence from their democratic success, must not seal themselves off from now on inside their delineated area of democratic security, at the risk of isolating themselves politically from the rest of the world. This would be all the more serious, for globalisation, despite its adverse effects on Europe, can also be beneficial, particularly in terms of publicising and sharing its successes.
5. Politically, Europe has based itself on a system of universal values which it must not only guarantee in its own countries, but should also share with other populations and disseminate outside its own borders. Europe must pass on its democratic experience and display good political sense, persuading its neighbours to adopt and implement the same values, so as to guarantee political continuity and stability beyond its own limits.
6. The Assembly considers that, to achieve this, the Council of Europe must draw on its unparalleled achievements and experience, making use of both its legal and political arsenal (conventions, recommendations, etc.) or its organs and other institutions (the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission), etc.). Local democracy and local self-government could pave the way to more fully developed co-operation with countries bordering the Council of Europe area.

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1. Assembly debate on 6 October 2006 (31st Sitting) (see [Doc. 11009](#), report of the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs, rapporteur: Mr Gubert). Text adopted by the Assembly on 6 October 2006 (31st Sitting).



7. To this end, all Council of Europe member states must without fail live up to the statutory ideals and the commitments they have made to recognising and implementing democratic principles, particularly those relating to local self-government. The Assembly notes that certain member states have yet to complete their internal reforms to establish local democracy fully in line with the provisions of the European Charter of Local Self-Government, whether through appropriate legislation or through the implementation of existing laws.
8. The Council of Europe itself and its member states ought also to engage in co-operation with non-member countries along the Organisation's boundaries, particularly in relation to local democracy. In this context, member states on the outer rim of the Organisation's area should be particularly active in promoting the values of the Council of Europe, and especially local self-government.
9. In this regard, the Assembly welcomes and supports the initiatives of the Congress on the creation of a new kind of euroregion to develop co-operation within extensive transfrontier regions, thanks to structures encompassing all the relevant authorities, similar to those of the Adriatic euroregion. It also supports the proposal to set up a Council of Europe centre for interregional and transfrontier co-operation.
10. The Assembly wishes to avoid conflicts along Council of Europe borders such as those that have taken place in the past between neighbouring populations and member states by creating divisions and splits. Today, these have been overcome, largely thanks to the co-operation activities promoted by the Council of Europe.
11. The Assembly therefore recommends that the Committee of Ministers:
  - 11.1. invite all member states to sign and/or ratify the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities and the two protocols thereto (ETS Nos. 159 and 169);
  - 11.2. invite Andorra, France, Monaco, San Marino and Serbia to sign and/or ratify the European Charter of Local Self-Government;
  - 11.3. provide for the two aforementioned conventions to be opened for signature by non-member states;
  - 11.4. take the requisite steps and make the necessary contacts in due course so that non-member states bordering on the Organisation sign the two aforementioned conventions;
  - 11.5. promptly invite member states, and especially those on the outer rim of the Organisation, to develop co-operation with non-member bordering states with a view to the latter recognising the principles set down in the two aforementioned conventions;
  - 11.6. establish a political agreement and provide a legal framework to enable co-operation on local democracy to be developed with non-member states bordering on the Organisation;
  - 11.7. instruct the relevant Council of Europe directorates and departments to make any helpful contacts with the authorities of non-member bordering countries with a view to drawing their attention to the aforementioned conventions, so that their provisions may gradually be integrated into those countries' legislation.
12. The Assembly invites the national parliaments of member states to co-operate with the parliaments of non-member bordering states with a view to their including in their legislation the principles of the European Charter of Local Self-Government and the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities.
13. The Assembly invites the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe to:
  - 13.1. disseminate the two aforementioned conventions and their principles among local authorities and their associations in Council of Europe bordering countries;
  - 13.2. promote co-operation between local and regional authorities of member states and those of Council of Europe bordering countries, particularly in respect of local self-government.