

**Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)12
of the Committee of Ministers to member states
on capacity building at local and regional level**

*(adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 10 October 2007
at the 1006th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.b of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Recalling that the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe, in the Final Declaration adopted at their Third Summit (Warsaw, 16-17 May 2005) declared that “effective democracy and good governance at all levels are essential for preventing conflicts, promoting stability, facilitating economic and social progress and hence for creating sustainable communities where people want to live and work, now and in the future”;

Also recalling that, according to the said declaration, this requires the active involvement of citizens and civil society;

Aware that the Warsaw Declaration calls on member states to “maintain and develop effective, transparent and accountable democratic institutions, responsive to the needs and aspirations of all”;

Considering that the European Charter of Local Self-government (ETS No. 122) states that “local self-government denotes the right and the ability of local authorities, within the limits of the law, to regulate and manage a substantial share of public affairs under their own responsibility and in the interests of the local population”;

Considering that in order to give effect to this provision local authorities need:

1. well-established legal and institutional frameworks and “full and exclusive” competences in accordance with the provisions of the European Charter of Local Self-Government;
2. financial resources which, having regard to the Charter, should be “commensurate with the responsibilities provided for by the constitution and the law”; and
3. the capacity to deliver high quality local public services and to engage the population in its democratic functioning;

Considering that this capacity concerns in particular the necessary political leadership and qualified human resources, involving the community in local affairs and devising and applying appropriate strategic management methods, processes and good practices;

Considering that this capacity depends both on elected representatives and on the staff of local authorities¹;

Considering that local authorities' lack of such capacity, or even the perception thereof, may contribute to reluctance to endow them with legal competences and resources and thus may hinder the full implementation of the principle of local self-government;

Considering that member states have a legitimate interest in local government capacity and its development;

Considering that the efforts of the governments of member states to strengthen the capacity of local authorities should not interfere with democratic electoral processes nor impinge on the principle of local self-government;

Considering that the development of the capacity of local authorities may in such cases involve not only local authorities themselves, but also central and regional government, in so far as they have

responsibility for local government, as well as other actors at national and international level, including associations of local authorities;

Considering that institutional dialogue with associations of local authorities may play a very important role in the development of the capacity of local authorities and that it should respect the criteria of effectiveness, transparency, accountability, representativeness and efficiency;

Considering that the Declaration of the Budapest Ministerial Conference on delivering good local and regional governance, adopted by the Conference of European Ministers responsible for Local and Regional Government at its 14th session in Budapest, Hungary, in February 2005, and subsequently endorsed by the Plan of Action adopted at the Third Summit, underlines the importance that is to be attached to the capacity of local government;

Considering that, pursuant to the Action Plan agreed on at the Third Summit, the Centre of Expertise on Local Government Reform was established with a particular focus on capacity building at local government level;

Having regard to the lessons to be drawn from the programmes and activities implemented so far in a number of member states in the field of capacity building, which confirm the importance of capacity-building policies for the sustainability and consolidation of local government and its democratic reform;

Considering that the Council of Europe's intergovernmental *acquis* in the area of local and regional democracy should explicitly recognise the importance of capacity for local authorities, and address to a greater extent local government capacity and its development;

Having consulted the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe,

Recommends the governments of member states:

1. to recognise clearly:

a. the importance of local government capacity to deliver high quality local public services and to engage the inhabitants in the democratic functioning of local authorities;

b. that the capacity of local government hinges essentially on the skills of elected representatives, the corporate management capacity of the organisation, the workforce capacity (its skills, recruitment and retention) and financial and project management skills;

c. the importance of developing this capacity further;

2. to co-operate, where appropriate, with local authorities and other stakeholders including associations of local authorities in drawing up a strategic approach to the development of the capacity of local government which identifies needs, devises concrete, practical and targeted programmes and makes arrangements for their implementation;

3. to enable, encourage and, where appropriate, help local authorities and other stakeholders including associations of local authorities, within a framework of consultation and co-operation and drawing on the strategic approach, to:

– develop their role in strengthening local government capacity, as concerns both elected representatives and staff;

– draw up their own strategic plans for building up the capacities of local authorities to continually enhance their leadership and strategic management, service provision, community participation and public ethics;

– establish the necessary structures, processes and capacities within their own organisation to research, plan, fund, implement and evaluate capacity-building programmes for local and regional authorities;

- make best use of such capacity-building methodologies as training, peer review, benchmarking and sharing of best practices;
 - make the best use of performance management techniques to improve standards of service provision;
 - draw on relevant parts of the Council of Europe's *acquis* and tools, including notably Committee of Ministers' Recommendation Rec(2001)19 on the participation of citizens in local public life and the Handbook of good practices on public ethics at local level;
4. to review, where it is within their competence, with relevant stakeholders, including, as the case may be, local authorities and/or their associations, the conditions of service of local government employees with a view to ensuring that they permit the recruitment of high quality staff on the basis of merit and competence and that to this end adequate training opportunities, remuneration and career prospects are provided;
 5. to share with other member states and international partners capacity-building tools, the results of the programmes implemented with them and make the best possible use of this information;
 6. to encourage, where appropriate, international exchanges of experience between local authorities and other stakeholders including associations of local authorities;
 7. to the extent that responsibility for regulating the framework of local government is entrusted to regional levels of government, to encourage them to implement the measures envisaged in the paragraphs 1 to 5 above;
 8. to translate this recommendation into their official language(s) and actively disseminate it to all relevant parties, including local authorities and their associations.

Note ¹ For the purposes of this recommendation, the term “elected representatives” includes, as appropriate, non elected persons who hold a local mandate and are politically accountable to a directly elected local assembly.

Related Documents

Meetings

[1006th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies](#) / 10 October 2007

Other documents

[CM/Del/Dec\(2007\)1006/2.4bE](#) / 12 October 2007 