

**INTERVENTION OF MR. ANDREAS VYRAS, MEMBER OF THE  
CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES OF THE  
COUNCIL OF EUROPE, PRESIDENT OF THE UNION OF CYPRUS  
MUNICIPALITIES AND MAYOR OF LARNACA DURING THE  
MONITORING COMMITTEE SESSION ON JUNE 28<sup>TH</sup> 2018**

Honourable President,

Dear Colleagues,

I am addressing the Committee to support the position of my colleague, Mr. Yiorkadjis, Mayor of the divided city of Nicosia, as I feel he is bringing forward a very important issue in the letter he addressed to the Mayors of European Capitals.

His initiative of putting the Treaty of local self-government, a text signed under the auspices of the Council of Europe, in the center of the discussion is more relevant than ever. We live in an era where democracy and values such as international cooperation are put under serious doubt by a large variety of actors, including State Governments. Such behaviours undermine significantly the reason of being of bodies like the Congress and our Committee.

We, as representatives of Local Government, need to take action to prove that not only we are an essential part of our respective democratic system but also that the fruits of our international cooperation, like the Treaty in question, can play a key role in ensuring that we do our job in the best way possible and in the best interest of our citizens.

It is true indeed that Local Authorities are deprived of this important role. Central government institutions are often unwilling to give or share responsibilities with Local Authorities on matters that should be handled on a local level for efficiency reasons. Another scenario is that central institutions give away these responsibilities to Local Authorities without first ensuring that the necessary infrastructure and financial support are properly instore leading to blockages that have a negative effect on our citizens' life.

A collective effort for a more substantial implementation of the European Charter of Local Self-Government could significantly contribute towards the improvement of the functioning of Local Authorities as well as Democracy in general in our home countries.

Therefore, dear colleagues, I would like to urge you to support Mr. Yiorkadjis' initiative and take his message back home to all relevant stakeholders. We should be able to use the tools that are already to our disposal in the best possible way. After all, it is in the best interest of every European citizen.

Thank you.