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Congress Vice-President: Local authorities are crucial to Ukraine's EU accession

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Konstantinos Koukas made remarks before the Ukraine Recovery Conference in Gdańsk

CONGRESS | GDAŃSK, POLAND | 24 JUNE 2026



Konstantinos Koukas (left) Congress Vice President, is a former Mayor of Mykonos, Greece

“Ukraine’s path to recovery and its accession to the European Union are inherently local processes. Over 70% of the EU acquis is implemented at the local and regional level. Ukraine’s sustainable recovery requires a robust, decentralised framework where local authorities are recognised as strategic partners and integral decision-makers,” underlined the Council of Europe’s Congress Vice-President Konstantinos Koukas (Greece, EPP/CCE) in Gdańsk, Poland, on 24 June 2026.

Addressing the European Alliance of cities and regions for the reconstruction of Ukraine, which met on the eve of the Ukraine Recovery Conference, Vice-President Koukas pointed out that Ukrainian municipalities and regions were actively leading the resilience of their nation as true actors of change on the ground, and the Congress remained committed to making sure that their role in Ukraine’s European future is fully secured.

Children and young people must be part of reconstruction thinking

Speaking at another side event dedicated to children’s rights in Ukraine’s recovery and reconstruction, Vice-President Koukas highlighted the need for decentralised reintegration of children and their families in local communities, with local authorities empowered to rebuild child-friendly infrastructure. He further outlined Congress action in Ukraine aimed at involving children and young people in local decision making.

“The physical reconstruction of Ukraine must go hand in hand with the **reinforcement of its democratic institutions**. Bricks and mortar alone do not create resilience; strong, transparent, and autonomous local authorities do,” stressed Congress Secretary General **Mathieu Mori** speaking at another side event on relevance of the Council of Europe standards compliance with Ukraine’s reconstruction. He

pointed out that Ukraine's decentralisation reform had been a cornerstone of its wartime resilience, and keeping local self-government aligned with **Council of Europe standards** was essential for a sustainable, democratic, and European future. The participants highlighted that rebuilding Ukraine was not only about infrastructure – it was about institutions, trust, accountability and the rule of law.

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