



**Andreas Kiefer** moderating a workshop on youth participation in elections during the 2014 World Forum for Democracy in Strasbourg.

# Andreas Kiefer

**Candidate for Secretary General  
of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities**

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## Biography

**Andreas Kiefer** was born on 6 October 1957 in Salzburg, Austria. He studied Law and Economics at the Universities of Salzburg and Linz and holds a doctorate of Law since 1984. He actively participated in professional training programmes on management, leadership, gender mainstreaming and interpersonal skills and finished a post-graduate university programme „General Management with a focus on public management“. He is – in addition to his German mother tongue - fluent in English and French.

After his studies Andreas Kiefer worked as Chef de Cabinet of Land Salzburg's President Hans Katschthaler (1984-1995) and was Director of the European Affairs Service of Land Salzburg from 1996 until 2010. In this capacity he worked for all members of Land Salzburg in the Congress and the Committee of the Regions. From 2000-2009 he represented the Austrian Länder in the EU's Intergovernmental Conferences (IGC) negotiating the Treaty on a Constitution for Europe and the Lisbon Treaty at working level and subsequently he was responsible for setting up the Lisbon-Treaty-based scheme for monitoring subsidiarity and proportionality by the Länder. In 2003 he served as Secretary General of the Conference of Presidents of Regions with Legislative Powers (REGLEG).

His contribution to the creation of the EuRegio Salzburg-Berchtesgadener Land-Traunstein with nearly 100 municipalities is a concrete example for applied cross-border co-operation. Andreas Kiefer served as chairman and member of electoral committees for municipal, regional, federal and European elections in Salzburg and Kuchl and initiated a citizen participation project to integrate new residents in his home municipality of Kuchl in Land Salzburg, Austria.

On 17 March 2010 he was elected Secretary General of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe for a five-year term.

Andreas Kiefer is married to Carmen Kiefer. She is a self-employed PR consultant and has been 1st Deputy Mayor of the Municipality of Kuchl since 1999; they have three children, Julia, Severin and Mario.

Andreas Kiefer has been a speaker at a number of international conferences and has given lectures at universities and post graduate courses. He has published widely about local self-government, regionalism, interregional co-operation, human rights and citizen participation. He is a member of the European Association of Researchers on Federalism, a member of the Scientific Committee of the Institute for Studies on Federalism and Regionalism of the European Academy of Bolzano/Bozen (EURAC) and a member of the board of the Salzburg Institute for Education (Salzburger Bildungswerk).



The Secretary General of the Congress keeps members informed regularly about his contacts with the Committee of Ministers, the progress made in the work of the committees and about developments in the political bodies of the Council of Europe. \*\*\* Meetings with political representatives of the member states – as here with Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Communities and Local Government in the UK Government – serve to maintain a dialogue about plans for devolution and conferral of responsibilities to local and regional authorities as well as to discuss follow-up given to recommendations resulting from Congress monitoring missions. \*\*\* In a busy professional life the secret to keeping a balance is to look at things from a distance. For Andreas Kiefer the mountains are a source of recreation and of new energy – on skis in winter and on hiking trails in summer.

## Knowledge and commitment

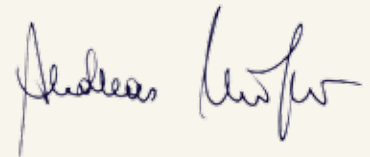
***D***ear Congress members,

*Having worked in the field of local democracy for many years at local, regional, national and European level and being well integrated in international professional and academic networks, I want to continue to take the responsibility, as Secretary General, for implementing the political priorities and the work programme as adopted by the Congress, its Bureau and its committees.*

*Supported by committed colleagues in the secretariat I was able to implement the reform launched by the Bureau and to establish a new quality of relations and co-operation with the institutional partners in the Council of Europe as well as with the Committee of the Regions, with the European associations of local and regional authorities and other pertinent stakeholders. The Congress has developed into a respected political actor, a professional monitoring body and a valued provider of operational projects in the field.*

*I am determined to continue dedicating my experience and capacities to the Congress and to continuing this mission and work in a spirit of ongoing reform and improvement, of result-orientation and teamwork.*

*Serving the political leadership of the Congress with initiative and loyalty, co-operating closely with Thorbjørn Jagland, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, and working with the Committee of Ministers, the Parliamentary Assembly and the Human Rights Commissioner will further increase the political impact and visibility of the Congress and its work.*



Close and regular contact with Thorbjørn Jagland, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, is indispensable in order to develop the role and contributions of the Congress to coherent action in promoting and defending the values of the Council of Europe. \*\*\* The Congress adds the local and regional dimension to citizen participation, preventing corruption, combatting radicalisation and promoting inclusive societies. Anne Brasseur, President of the Parliamentary Assembly, and its Secretary General Wojciech Sawicki are key partners for the Congress as a political assembly. \*\*\* Regular exchanges with the Committee of Ministers, here with Ambassador Astrid Helle, Chair of the Committee of Ministers' Rapporteur Group on Democracy since 2014, are opportunities to present the political activities of the Congress in the Council of Europe bodies.

## 2010-2015: Milestones and achievements

**I**n the spirit of the substantial reform launched and implemented under the political leadership of the Congress Presidents Yavuz Mildon, Ian Micallef, Keith Whitmore, Herwig van Staa and – since 2014 – Jean-Claude Frécon, the Congress achieved a new profile and status within the Organisation. After being elected Secretary General of the Congress in 2010, Andreas Kiefer implemented the reform and new orientation by creating the structures for the new committees in the secretariat, by introducing new working methods and by involving more members in the political work of the Congress.

**T**he major achievement was the ratification of the European Charter of Local Self-government by the last remaining countries and since 2013 all 47 member states adhere to the common standards of the Charter. This was positively remarked upon by the Committee of Ministers which now holds more regular and substantial exchanges of views with the Congress Presidents and the Secretary General.

**T**o make sure that the Congress focuses on the core activities of the local and regional dimension of democracy, human rights and the rule of law Secretary General Kiefer has introduced a systematic assessment of the added value and the expected results of a proposed Congress report. Thus the Congress can be relevant and respond to the current challenges for our pluralist democracy and local communities. The Congress included the local dimension of human rights among its priorities and adopted key reference documents as a basis for future activities.

**T**he new guidelines for monitoring the European Charter of Local Self-government and for observing local and regional elections as well as, in 2013, the introduction of a post-monitoring and post-election observation dialogue with member states' governments also contribute to more impact of the work of the Congress. The aim is to discuss and agree on a roadmap to implement the proposals made in Congress monitoring reports so that they are not simply shelved after adoption. In parallel the responsibility of rapporteurs has been strengthened and enhanced. Now, with the adoption of a report, a resolution and a recommendation the concrete result-oriented follow-up work begins.

**T**aking up the logic of the reform launched by Secretary General Thorbjørn Jagland, Andreas Kiefer has established sound working relations with the new heads of the Directorates General for Democracy, for Human Rights and Rule of Law and for Operational Programmes. This has led to the full inclusion of the Congress in the preparation and implementation of Council of Europe Action Plans in order to improve the situation of local democracy in the respective countries. The activities carried out by the Congress build on the experiences of the Congress members and this peer-to-peer-approach makes the Congress activities unique and much in demand.

**O**ver the last years the permanent staff of the Congress has had to be reduced due to the restrictive budgetary policy of the Organisation. The main challenge for the upcoming budgetary process will, therefore, be to secure the capacity to act and the functioning of the statutory work performed by the committees.

We were able to mobilise significant additional temporary staff and financial resources for co-operation projects. This operational dimension of the Congress is a valuable new field of activities since 2013 and encompasses the management of projects amounting to € 3.2 million between 2013 and 2017.



Identifying synergies, working together in key areas of common interest and respecting each other's' responsibilities and specific roles – these are the principles that guide the Congress' relations with its partners beyond the Council of Europe. With the Committee of the Regions – here with the new CoR-President Markku Markkula – the Congress co-operates in making available its findings from monitoring reports especially for candidate countries and the Eastern Partnership countries. \*\*\* Functioning democratic structures and the fight against corruption is of special interest for EU-Commissioner Johannes Hahn, responsible for the EU neighbourhood policy and enlargement negotiations and he appreciates the grassroots contacts offered by the Congress which implements governance and leadership programmes in several of these countries. \*\*\* Excellent working relations with the Secretaries General of the major European associations of local and regional authorities such as AER, CEMR, EUROCITIES, AEBR, CPRM and CALRE are the basis for mutual support, co-operation and synergies in thematic activities of common concern.

**Andreas Kiefer** - Secretary General of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

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