

Andreas Kiefer, candidate for Secretary General of the Congress - Transcript of the 3-minutes video statement

Dear members of the Congress,

I would have hoped to present my candidature as Secretary General of the Congress to you in this hemicycle, the place you know very well. Unfortunately, we were not able to hold the two sessions this year, so this video replaces the live exchange we could have had.

In 2010 and 2015 you entrusted me with the responsibility of advising the Bureau, of implementing the political priorities and the work programmes of the Chambers and the committees, to lead and guide the staff and to manage the financial resources. Together with the team in the secretariat we have done our best and achieved a lot in implementing these objectives. In addition to our institutional work, we have embarked on new themes: we have dealt with the dimension of human rights at local and regional level, the challenges of migration and integration, the threats of corruption and how to prevent them, gender equality, youth participation – just to name a few. We have reached out to our institutional partners beyond the Council of Europe and to the academic world. So, I think we can say that the reputation of the Congress, its performance and delivery, have improved.

The topics which we are confronted with now bring new challenges, for example “mayors under pressure”. You remember the debates you had on the difficulties of finding women and men ready to stand for political office. This is a real threat to representative democracy!

We have established a political dialogue with our governments after election observation missions and monitoring missions and reports. Now, we are very proud that the recommendations of the Congress lead to concrete activities in cooperation projects in the framework of Council of Europe Action Plans in several of our member states.

So, we are working as a forum of exchange of politicians, as an advisory body for the Committee of Ministers, as a monitoring body and as an operational secretariat with the help of many members, who share their experiences with peers from other countries.

For the future, I would like to assure you that I am ready to dedicate all my energy, my experiences and my international networks to serving the Congress, to making it reliable, visible and able to deliver!