

The Bureau of the Congress

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9 September 2019

## **Exchange of letters with Amélie DE MONTCHALIN, Chair of the Committee of Ministers**

*Document submitted for information to the Bureau of the Congress on 11 September 2019*

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<sup>1</sup> This document is classified confidential until it has been examined by the Bureau of the Congress



CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES  
CONGRÈS DES POUVOIRS LOCAUX ET RÉGIONAUX



*The President*

Unofficial translation

**Ms Amélie de Montchalin**

State Secretary to the Minister of Europe and  
Foreign Affairs, in charge of European Affairs  
37, Quai d'Orsay  
75007 Paris  
France

Strasbourg, 15 July 2019

Madam Secretary of State,

I have received your letter of congratulations on the occasion of the joint anniversary that the Congress of the Council of Europe has just celebrated in the European Parliament, in Brussels, with the Committee of the Regions of the European Union.

I strongly share your vision of the local challenges for our member countries and especially for all European citizens. Thanks to the president of the Chamber of Local Authorities, Xavier Cadoret, we have a substantial account of his participation in one of the major debates organised with mayors by Emmanuel Macron, the President of the French Republic, and from then on, we understood the French President's determined commitment in this respect.

You also stress the need to defend this approach at European level and the usefulness of our institutions in this respect: I would like to tell you how much this position of the French Government pleases us at a time when the Council of Europe is going through difficulties which force it to reconsider its mission and its role in the construction of Europe. Knowing your government is with us in reaffirming the local dimension of the action of the European institutions is a valuable asset.

I am all the more satisfied that, for us, France has always played an essential and often decisive role in the creation and development of the Congress within the Council of Europe, from Jacques Chaban-Delmas, In 1957, the initial founder of our assembly to Catherine Lalumière, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, who, at the first Summit of Heads of State and Government in Vienna in 1993, proposed the current structure of the Congress.

That is why being able to count on France today is part of a long tradition of trust and mutual loyalty.

It is in this spirit that I will be particularly happy to meet you in the coming weeks and to discuss with you the problems of our Congress.

**Anders Knappe**

cc: **M. Jean-Baptiste Mattei**, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of France to the Council of Europe

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**MINISTÈRE DE L'EUROPE  
ET DES AFFAIRES ÉTRANGÈRES**

*La secrétaire d'État  
chargée des affaires européennes*

Paris, le

**01 JUL, 2019**

CABAEU/BME/N° **D-00355-19**

Dear President,

On the occasion of the 25th anniversary that both the European Committee of the Regions of the European Union and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe are celebrating this year, I would like to extend my warm congratulations to you. The role of these two institutions, which you and Karl-Heinz Lambertz respectively have the honour of chairing, is essential in promoting local democracy and embodying the European institutions in the heart of the territories, as close as possible to the citizens.

It seems essential that the European project, whether carried out by the European Union or the Council of Europe, should be more visible to citizens, civil society, the social partners and local actors. The issue of proximity, which citizens rightly demand more and more at national level every day, also applies to the European level. Your respective roles in this regard are essential.

To this end, I regularly exchange views with representatives of French local authorities on the implementation, by local actors, of European values and public policies. Without this dialogue and proximity, Europe will remain far from our fellow citizens.

*/.*

Mr Anders KNAPE  
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Congress of Local and Regional Authorities  
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The President of the French Republic has proposed the organisation of a conference for Europe, bringing together citizens and European institutions on the European Union's strategic programme. I have no doubt that the institutions over which you preside will wish to play their full part.

As a Secretary of State for European Affairs and, until 27 November, President of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, I am particularly attentive to the bridges that can be built between the Union and the Council of Europe.

That is why I would like to welcome the holding of a joint anniversary ceremony, which you organised in the Chamber of the European Parliament in Strasbourg, the European capital, symbol of the reconciliation of France and Germany, on 27 June. This event highlights the long-standing cooperation between the European Committee of the Regions and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities in strengthening local and regional democracy.

In order to discuss these issues with you, I would be delighted to meet you in Strasbourg or Brussels in the coming months.

Yours sincerely,

*Working with those who are the relays of the European project in the field is essential. You can count on my support and gratitude for your ongoing commitment.*

*Faithfully,*

Amélie de MONTCHALIN

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Amélie de Montchalin', with a stylized flourish at the end.