

Dear Colleagues,

I am applying for the position of President of our Congress of Local and Regional Authorities.

I deeply believe in the values on which the Council of Europe is founded: the rule of law, democracy, and human rights. Supporting the anchoring of these values at local and regional level is the meaning of our commitment within the Congress.

As a member of the Congress for 18 years, I have been rapporteur for local democracy for Austria, Spain, Ukraine, Switzerland, Latvia, Hungary, Cyprus, Moldavia and Romania. I took part in several missions to observe local elections. I was Vice-President of the Congress. For several years, I have been President of the Independent, Liberal and Democratic Group.

My objectives for the Presidency of the Congress:

- **To strengthen the position of the Congress as the second political chamber of the Council of Europe;**
- To strengthen the role of the two elected assemblies, the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress, in the decision-making processes of the Council of Europe;
- Ensure that **the Congress is the centre of Council of Europe initiatives oriented towards local democracy** and that it obtains sufficient funding for its activities;
- To fully **support** and be in solidarity **with Ukraine** and to support all efforts that will be undertaken, once the war is over, to rebuild a strong local democracy;
- **Develop synergies with all the components of the Council of Europe**, and particularly with the European Court of Human Rights, as well as with all the other organisations representing local and regional authorities in Europe;
- Complete and implement the **concrete Congress action plan for human rights**, including the right to a healthy environment;
- **Promote the fight against corruption and for public ethics** at local and regional level;
- Energize and empower the Committee Bureaus and simplify Congress rules and procedures;
- Increase Congress cooperation projects in member states and neighbouring regions;
- Develop city diplomacy and actively involve the Congress within;
- Ensure **regular follow-up of adopted recommendations**;
- Broaden the participation of young delegates in the work of the Congress;
- Ensure the visibility of the Congress' actions.

My conception of the Presidency of the Congress and the way in which I intend to exercise it, if you put your trust in me, is that of **a collective effort** and to continue the work already done.

Best regards,



Marc Cools

26/09/2023

Marc Cools

Candidate for President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

Born on 1 January 1956 in Etterbeek, Belgium

Married, Father of three daughters

Education

Commercial engineering degree from the Solvay Business School at the Université Libre de Bruxelles



Professional experience

- Administrative secretary at the Fonds Belgo-Congolais d'Amortissement et de Gestion in 1980 and 1981
- Economic adviser to the Minister for the Brussels Region from 1981 to 1985
- Adviser to the Study Department of the Belgian Ministry of Finance from 1985 to 1989

Political responsibilities

- Member of the Brussels Parliament from 1989 to 2004
- Honorary Vice-President of the Brussels Parliament
- Local councillor for Uccle since 1986
- Deputy mayor of Uccle from 1990 to 2018
- President of Brulocalis (the Association of Town and Municipalities of the Brussels-Capital Region) from 2005 to 2019 and President of the Union of Belgian Towns and Municipalities from 2005 to 2006, from 2010 to 2012 and from 2016 to 2018.
- Leader of the Uccle En Avant group at Uccle Municipal Council since 2018

Congress experience

- Member of the Congress since December 2005
- Rapporteur on local democracy for Austria, Spain, Ukraine, Switzerland, Latvia, Hungary, Cyprus, Moldova and Romania.
- Rapporteur for Congress rules and procedures
- Participated in local election observation missions in Denmark, Ukraine and Moldova.
- Vice-President of the Congress from 2012 to 2014
- Chairman of the Independent and Liberal Democrat Group at the Congress from 2014 to 2023
- Vice-Chairman of the Belgian delegation to the Congress from 2013 to 2015 and Chairman of that delegation from 2015 to 2017

Other experience and activities

- Board member for several economic development companies
- Board member for several non-profit associations with a social vocation
- Author of several books, including "Le défi bruxellois"; "Morale et réalisation de soi"; "La politique pourquoi et comment?" and "Pensées pour moi-même".

