

“Defend and promote local and regional democracy!”

Strengthening of democracy, human rights and the rule of law at local and regional level are the core values of the Congress and the basic foundations for a functioning State. If these values were to be diminished, the consequences would be that all our member States would face an incremental decrease in solidarity with a corresponding increase in radicalisation, extremism, xenophobia and recentralisation. These consequences would be especially felt at the local and regional level.

The work of the Congress is, therefore, clearly more important than ever. Monitoring of local and regional democracy in member States and local election observation, both of which serve to strengthen political dialogue with our member States are among the main tasks of the Congress. These activities have proven themselves time and again in the past, but they must be continuously expanded and adapted to meet the changing conditions of the present day. In addition, I am committed to pursuing the goal of “100% Charter covering 100% of the territory of Europe”. Additionally, I would continue the effort to reduce duplication of tasks and pool our strength with the European regional associations and the Committee of the Regions which requires maintaining a good working relationship and co-operation with them. I would therefore like to continue the path pursued by the Congress in recent years to renew, improve and further develop these partnerships.

The confidence of the population in politicians is waning; this is shown, among other things, by the declining levels of voter participation and also by the growing number of so-called “protest votes”. A loss of confidence and fear are also responsible for a blind eye being increasingly turned to flagrant human rights abuses. This is why raising awareness of the importance of respecting human rights at both local and regional levels is, for me, a particular concern.

I will do my best to reinforce the commitment of States vis-à-vis the European Charter of Local Self-Government. In addition, I would like to continue and expand the ongoing campaigns in the field of fighting corruption, radicalism and violent extremism, based particularly on prevention and education.

Naturally, the question of the integration of refugees and immigrants as a major challenge for local and regional policy will remain essential in the upcoming period and I will strive to find concrete ways to address this within the Congress.

It is, furthermore, a matter of great concern to me that we focus our attention on the conditions and potential of Europe’s too-often forgotten rural zones that are being adversely affected by demographic and social changes.

Last but not least, the Congress has played an important role in involving young people actively in our work for several years, notably through the participation of youth delegates at our sessions or workshops for young politicians in the member States. The continuation of this work is very close to my heart.

Minister for Overseas France, Ms. George Pau-Langevin



Candidate for the position of the President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities 2016 - 2018

Gudrun Mosler-Törnström



Candidate for the position of the President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities

Gudrun Mosler-Törnström

Born on 13th October 1955 in Salzburg, Austria.
Married to Rudolf Mosler, Professor of Labour and Social Law.
Mother of three children.

Educational background

Attended the Higher Federal College for
Economic Professions for Women - Salzburg/Austria.
Completed Year 12 of High School - Leeds/Alabama/USA.
Studied System Sciences at the University of Stockholm/Sweden.
Graduated in 1986 with a Bachelor of Science (BSc).

Professional experience

System Analyst at Siemens Data in Stockholm/Sweden.
Programmer and System Analyst at Mannesmann
Kienzle in Salzburg/Austria.
Established and managed the first Ergonomics Centre in Salzburg/Austria.
Self-employed ergonomic consultant with a focus on screen work
in Salzburg/Austria.

Political career

Since 1999 member of the Salzburg State Parliament.
Functions: Deputy Chairperson for the Socialist Group
of the Salzburg State Parliament, President then
Vice President of the Parliament, currently Vice President
of the Salzburg State Parliament.
From 2009 to 2013 municipal councillor
in Puch at Hallein/Salzburg/Austria.

Experience in the Congress

Since 2009 a Member of the Congress.
2010-2012 Vice-President of the Monitoring Committee.
Since 2011 Head of the Austrian delegation.
2012-2014 Head of the Socialist Group within the Congress.
Since 2014 President of the Chamber of Regions
and first Vice-President of the Congress.
Head of delegation and Rapporteur in monitoring missions
(Lithuania, Azerbaijan, Sweden, Greece, France)
and election observations (Ukraine, Georgia, Azerbaijan).

Experiences as a volunteer

2002-2010 Chairperson of the Friends of
Nature in the State of Salzburg/Austria.
2004-2009 Chairperson of the Board of Salzburg Research.
Since 2006 President of Oberrain Ltd, an initiative for
disadvantaged youth in Salzburg/Austria.

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Motivation for my application

I firmly believe that the Congress embodies the approach I have always had to politics, and that is my personal motivation for applying for the position of Congress President. I value the opportunity to be heard, to take responsibility and to present my opinion while also listening to and considering the opinions of others. While the various cultures with differing political systems, requirements and experiences within that body may represent a challenge, we have always found solutions which we can support together.

As the Head of the Austrian delegation, head of the Socialist Group within the Congress and as President of the Chamber of Regions, through my participation in numerous monitoring and election observation activities and by representing the Congress at major conferences over the years, I have gained experience and developed strong personal and professional skills that significantly contribute to achieving added value for our assembly's collective work. My many years of political experience at both local and regional level, my communication skills, my openness to new ideas coupled with my hands-on approach are all traits that are an advantage for the position of President of the Congress.

An additional motivation for my candidacy is that, in its 60-plus year history the Congress has yet to see a female President. I am convinced that the time is now more than ripe for a woman to be elected to the Presidency and that this would be a strong signal that unequivocally demonstrates the modernity and openness of our Congress, the first European assembly to really come to grips with the issue of gender in the composition of its delegations.

Due to the geopolitical situation I am aware that we will face greater challenges than ever before in our work. These developments provide me with even more incentive to fight for our common, dearly-held and dearly bought values of democracy, human rights and rule of law.

If I am elected President of the Congress I can assure you that I will exert all of my strength, experience and skills to further build upon the success of my predecessors and to continue to develop and strengthen the role of the Congress within the Council of Europe.