

# Marc Cools

Candidate for the Presidency of the Congress  
of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe  
**2023-2026**



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*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 and contributing to the respect of the European Charter of Local Self-Government is the meaning of our commitment within the Congress.*

## Marc Cools

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 1990

## Political responsibilities

- Deputy 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
- President 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*».



# Promoting local and regional self-government throughout Europe

« Democracy and freedoms are not an optional luxury » wrote Jean-François Revel in "The Totalitarian Temptation".

This living democracy to which we all aspire is best developed at local level, where the link between elected representatives and citizens is closest. It's also at this level that young people can most easily be associated and involved in our democratic life. Respect for the principle of subsidiarity is also the guarantee of good governance. It is this reality that makes me a convinced municipalist and regionalist.

As member of the Congress since December 2005, I have been rapporteur on local democracy for Austria, Spain, Ukraine, Switzerland, Latvia, Hungary, Cyprus, Moldova and Romania. I have participated in local elections observations missions in Denmark, Ukraine, and Moldova. I was rapporteur for the rules and procedures of the Congress. I was also President of the Belgian delegation to the Congress. I have been a member of the Congress Bureau since 2012. First as Vice-President and after as President of the Independent, Liberal and Democrat Group. All this experience, as well as that of a regional elected representative for 15 years and a local elected representative since 1986, I want to put at the service of the Congress as its President.

**My conception of the Presidency of the Congress** and the way in which I wish to exercise it if you give me your confidence is that of the successive Presidents of the Congress with whom I have worked. **It's that of continuity and continuation of the work already done.** That of a collective effort.

## **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 obtain sufficient funding for its activities;
- To give our **full support** and solidarity to **Ukraine**, to participate actively in the establishment of the War Damage Register 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 (the Committee of the Regions, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions, the Assembly of European Regions, ...);
- 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.



*“The local authorities are one  
of the main foundations of  
any democratic regime”*

(Preamble of the European Charter of Local Self-Government)

**Marc Cools**

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