

Press Release

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Halvdan Skard elected President of the Council of Europe Congress

Strasbourg, 30.05.2006 – At the opening of its plenary session today, the Council of Europe Congress of Local and Regional Authorities unanimously elected Halvdan Skard (Norway, SOC) as its President for a two-year term. He has been the President of the Congress' Chamber of Local Authorities since 2002. Halvdan Skard succeeds Giovanni Di Stasi (Italy, SOC), who held this position for the past two years as a representative of the Chamber of Regions.

A member of Stavanger and Baerum Municipal Councils since 1968, he began his ministerial career as State Secretary in the Ministry of Culture, Education, Research and Ecclesiastical Affairs in 1976, before becoming Head of the Culture Secretariat of the Nordic Council of Ministers in 1982. The following year he was appointed Secretary General of the Norwegian National Cultural Council, a post he held for nine years.

A member of the Executive Board of the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities, he became its President in 1992 and, at the same time, leader of the Norwegian delegation to the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities.

Since his election to the Congress in 1988, he has occupied various posts, in particular those of Vice-President of the Chamber of Local Authorities and Chair of the Committee on Culture and Education. He became a member of the Bureau in 1996.

Halvdan Skard is also Vice-President and Chairman of the Financial Management Committee of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) and member of the World Council of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG).

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