



Series: Meet the Austrian Individual Members country coordinator

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Ronald Pohoryles is the country coordinator for ALDE Party Individual Members in Austria as well as one of the first individual members to join the ALDE Party individual membership with membership card number 0036.

Ronald is a dedicated European Liberal and was the speaker for European Affairs of the Liberal Forum (LIF) and ALDE Party Council Member between 2005 and 2012. In 2013 LIF joined forces with a civil society organisation to become the NEOS Party, current member of the ALDE Party. Currently, within NEOS, Ronald coordinates the thematic network on European and

international affairs.

Since 1989, Ronald is the director of a private non-profit social science research institute in Vienna with a focus on European developments, editor-in-chief of the academic journal *Innovation – The European Journal for Social Science Research* published by Routledge, and teaches Political Sciences at several universities.

His motivation to become a country coordinator: *"As a Liberal I was always interested to contribute to the development of a democratic, sustainable and liberal Europe, open to the entire world based on free societies. When I joined the Liberal Forum in 2013, I was not only active at a national level, serving as a Board Member between 2008 and 2012, but also actively engaging in European affairs being active both in the ALDE Party as Head of the Austrian delegation and, as the Director of the party think-tank Liberal Future Forum, within the European Liberal Forum, where I was also in the advisory group for its reform in 2012. Therefore, it was very natural for me to become an Individual Member since the very beginning and to organise the Austrian chapter of the ALDE Individual Members."*

His plan to activate individual membership: *"The Austrian chapter has developed slowly, but steadily. At the beginning, it was not particularly easy as the former LIF Members were aware of the importance of ALDE, but not all members of our new partner were convinced that such a group could be useful for the party and there was a certain distrust towards our group. Now, we have established a continuous collaboration with NEOS' MPs in charge of Europe and International Politics. "*

His vision of the individual membership: *"Individual Members promote the idea of a progressive, democratic, strong, efficient and ecologic European Union. Liberals are not only a community sharing principles, but political actors as well. Liberals must communicate that their ideas are quite distinct from the traditional conservative and social democratic concepts. The basic principles of Liberals are based on the liberal understanding of the role of the individual, the society, the state, the market and European integration. Our shared vision is our commitment to open societies based upon informed active citizens who claim their individual freedom. There is a necessary mutual understanding to ensure freedom and autonomy of the individual without damaging the rights of others as well as market economy as the most efficient and effective mode of production and distribution of wealth. Liberals also believe that the free market needs efficient and effective regulations to ensure fair competition and responsible behaviour towards society and the environment. Based on shared values there are different ideas for the implementation of liberal principles."*

Comparing liberal values across Europe is not a mere philosophical task; mutual learning across Europe should also improve our political activities. In this respect, common activities and strong cooperation at a regional level are among the important tasks of the ALDE Individual Members."

His vision of Europe:

- A Europe of peace and solidarity between its citizens and states;
- A democratic Europe that ensures the rule of the law and human rights;
- A Europe that guarantees individual freedom and the openness of societies;
- A Europe, in which informed citizens are empowered to actively participate in politics and culture;
- A Europe of prosperity based upon free markets, social rights and sustainability;
- A Europe, where the youth has equal opportunities for their prosperous future;

- A Europe based on cultural, ethnical and regional diversity;
- A Europe with a democratic and federal constitution;
- A Europe that is committed to its global responsibility.

Next events and plans in 2017 for ALDE Party Individual Members in Austria: *"We have regular meetings for our members and work closely with the MPs of NEOS in charge of European Affairs and International Politics. We organise events, do programmatic work and keep our [website](#) up-to-date. As recently the coalition between the Social Democrats and the Conservative Party was terminated prematurely by the conservatives for tactical reasons, we will support NEOS by emphasising the importance of European issues in the campaign. Like in other European countries, right-wing populism has gained strength and as one of their core issues is Euroscepticism we hold that a clear commitment to the deepening of the European Union. Our next meetings will focus on the development of a new NEOS Programme on the EU, position papers on the peace process in the Israel-Palestine conflict, the development of the Eurozone with a focus on Greece and Europe's role in the world."*

