

Council of Europe fact sheet

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Constituent Act

The Statute of the Council of Europe

Signed in London on 5 May 1949

Entered into force on 3 August 1949

Nature of the Act: international legal agreement (multilateral treaty subject to ratification by member states).

Member states

Number: 47.

Number of founding states: 10.

Founding states: Belgium, Denmark, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom.

Countries that acceded subsequently: Greece and Turkey (1949); Germany and Iceland (1950); Austria (1956); Cyprus (1961); Switzerland (1963); Malta (1965); Portugal (1976); Spain (1977); Liechtenstein (1978); San Marino (1988); Finland (1989); Hungary (1990); Poland (1991); Bulgaria (1992); Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia (1993); Andorra (1994); Albania, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Latvia, Moldova and Ukraine (1995); Croatia and the Russian Federation (1996); Georgia (1999); Armenia and Azerbaijan (2001); Bosnia-Herzegovina (2002); Serbia (2003); Monaco (2004); and Montenegro (2007).

Membership conditions

Membership is open to European states which:

- accept the principles of the rule of law and of the enjoyment by all persons within its jurisdiction of human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- collaborate sincerely and effectively in the realisation of the organisation's aims (Articles 3 and 4 of the Statute).

Aims

To achieve a greater unity between its members for the purpose of safeguarding and realising the ideals and principles which are their common heritage and facilitating their economic and social progress (Article 1 of the Statute).

Ideals and principles: peace based upon justice and international cooperation, individual freedom, political liberty, the rule of law and democracy (Preamble of the Statute).

Activities

Addressing issues of common interest, negotiating agreements, adopting joint measures in economic, social, cultural, scientific, legal and administrative matters, safeguarding and promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms (Article 1 of the Statute).

Bodies

Statutory bodies: Committee of Ministers, Parliamentary Assembly, Secretariat (Article 10 of the Statute).

Subsidiary bodies: European Court of Human Rights, European Commission of Human Rights, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe.

Resources

- Permanent international staff (officials);
- Financial contributions from member states.

Official languages

English and French.

Headquarters

Strasbourg (Article 11 of the Statute).

Legal personality

Yes (Article 1 of the General Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the Council of Europe).

Classification of the organisation

According to its composition: regional organisation (Europe).

According to its areas of activity: political organisation.

According to its functions: organisation for conciliation (harmonisation of positions taken by the member states).

According to its working method: organisation based on intergovernmental cooperation.

According to the nature of its cooperation: organisation which fosters cooperation on standards (drafting of multilateral agreements).