

The seat of the Council of Europe

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The seat of the Council of Europe

At the Conference on the establishment of a Council of Europe, which was held in London from 3 to 5 May 1949, the delegates from the governments of the founding states decided that the organisation's seat would be Strasbourg. After centuries of being at the heart of Franco-German conflicts, the city was chosen as a symbolic site for European reconciliation.

Article 11 of the Council of Europe's Statute, signed in London on 5 May 1949, established the organisation's seat in Strasbourg. In addition, the final part of Article 40(b) reads: 'a special agreement shall be concluded with the Government of the French Republic defining the privileges and immunities which the Council shall enjoy at its seat.'

It was on this basis that the Special Agreement relating to the Seat of the Council of Europe was signed in Paris on 2 September 1949 between the Council of Europe and the Government of the French Republic with a view to ensuring compliance with the two aforementioned articles. The Agreement entered into force on 28 November 1949 following an exchange of notes between the Council of Europe's Secretary General, duly authorised by a resolution of the Committee of Ministers, and the representative of the French Government empowered for this purpose.

Strasbourg's European District is home to the Council of Europe's premises.

The organisation operated in the 'Maison de l'Europe' until a new building, the 'Palais de l'Europe', was officially opened on 28 January 1977. Until December 1999, when a building for the European Parliament was inaugurated, the European Communities' parliamentary institution also held its plenary sittings in the Chamber in the Palais de l'Europe.

Finally, the Human Rights Building was built in 1966 to house the Commission and Court of Human Rights. Over the years, it became too small, and work began, in 1991, on a new building which was inaugurated in June 1995.

Address:

Council of Europe
Avenue de l'Europe
F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex