

Membership of the Council of Europe and the admission of new members

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The admission of ordinary member states

Article 3 states that a condition of membership of the Council of Europe is respect for the *principle of the rule of law* and of the *principle of the enjoyment by all persons within its jurisdiction of human rights and fundamental freedoms*. Any European state deemed willing and able to fulfil these provisions may be invited to become a member of the organisation by the Committee of Ministers. Since 1951, the Committee of Ministers, which ultimately approves the membership of a new state if it secures a two-thirds majority, has undertaken to seek the opinion of the Consultative Assembly not only on the invitations to be addressed to prospective members but also on the number of seats that such members will be allocated in the Assembly.

Prior to forwarding the invitation, the Committee of Ministers lays down the number of seats to which the new member will be entitled in the Assembly and the financial contribution that it will have to make.

The admission of associate members

In accordance with Article 5 of the Statute, in special circumstances, a European country deemed willing and able to fulfil the provisions of Article 3 may be invited by the Committee of Ministers to become an associate member of the Council of Europe. The membership process is identical to that for ordinary member states.