

The Secretariat

Consisting of a Secretary General, a Deputy Secretary General and the necessary staff, the body that assists the Committee and the Assembly has become more than a mere administrative support structure. Its technical, coordinating and consultative skills quickly ensured that it played an important role as a body for providing suggestions and guidance.

The Secretary General and the Deputy Secretary General are appointed by the Consultative Assembly on a recommendation of the Committee of Ministers. The other members of the Secretariat are appointed by the Secretary General in accordance with the administrative Rules of Procedure.

French politician Jacques Camille Paris became the first Secretary General of the Council of Europe on 11 August 1949.

The tasks entrusted to the Secretary General include the following:

- liaising between the Committee of Ministers and the Consultative Assembly and providing them with the necessary staff and administrative resources;
- attending meetings of the Committee of Ministers and taking part in debates in an advisory capacity;
- establishing a list of the decisions taken by the Committee and ensuring that it is distributed to all the members;
- preparing reports on the Committee's activities, which are then forwarded, accompanied by the relevant background documents, to the members of both the Committee and the Assembly at the opening of their respective sessions;
- drawing up reports when requested to do so by the Committee;
- since the adoption by the Committee of Resolution (57) 26 on 13 December 1957, drawing up an annual report on political cooperation in preparation for the Assembly's spring session;
- submitting a draft budget to the Committee and drawing up an annual report on the Secretariat's activities;
- notifying states of any decisions taken by the Committee concerning their status within the organisation (invitations to become members, suspensions or expulsions) and receiving notification from states (of withdrawal);
- signing agreements on the organisation's behalf, in accordance with the General Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the Council of Europe which confirms that the organisation possesses legal personality and has the capacity to conclude contracts, to acquire and dispose of movable and immovable property and to institute legal proceedings;
- since the adoption by the Committee of the Statutory Resolution of May 1951, incorporated into the revised Statute, submitting conventions and agreements to states for ratification and acting as the Depositary of the instruments of ratification.

In addition to providing secretariats for the statutory bodies, the General Secretariat is also responsible for providing secretariats for subsidiary bodies such as the Congress of Regional and Local Authorities of the Council of Europe and the Registry of the European Court of Human Rights.