



Rules of Procedure of the Committee of Ministers (6th revised edition: 2020)¹

COMMITTEE
OF MINISTERS
COMITÉ
DES MINISTRES



¹ Text adopted by the Committee of Ministers at its 9th Session (August 1951) with amendments adopted at its 10th Session (March 1952), 16th Session (July 1955) and 23rd Session (December 1958); and the 73rd (June 1959), 133rd (July 1964), 934th (July 2005) and 1388th (November 2020) meetings of the Ministers' Deputies.

Article 1²

- a. The Committee of Ministers shall be in session during the days immediately preceding and following the opening of the session of the Consultative Assembly.³ The Committee shall meet again as soon after the end of the session of the Assembly as it shall deem expedient.
- b. If any of the members or the Secretary General so request, the Committee may decide to meet in session at other times. If the Committee is not in session, the request shall be communicated by the Secretary General to the members, and a decision in favour of holding a session shall be regarded as taken by the majority required under Article 20.d of the Statute if two-thirds of the members inform the Secretary General of their agreement.
- c. In case of exceptional circumstances,⁴ where such circumstances impede member State representatives (ministers or their representatives) from convening in a single location, a session of the Committee of Ministers may be held in private by videoconference, in its entirety or in part. Remote attendance of member States' representatives at a session of the Committee of Ministers shall be treated as presence in person for the purposes of the Statute and of the Rules of Procedure, for all proceedings such as quorum, participation in discussions and voting. In sessions held by videoconference, voting, if any, should take place by electronic means only.

The proposal to hold a session by videoconference shall be made by the Chair of the Committee of Ministers or by the Secretary General, in accordance with the Statute of the Council of Europe and the Rules of Procedure of the Committee of Ministers.

Article 2

The Chairman shall, after consulting the representatives on the Committee, fix the exact date for the opening of each session, and the Secretary General shall notify it to members.

Article 3

When a session of the Committee has been arranged in accordance with the provisions of Articles 1.b and 2, any request for postponement shall be made at least fifteen days before the date fixed for the opening of the session; a decision in favour of postponing the session shall be regarded as taken by the majority required under Article 20.d of the Statute if two-thirds of the members inform the Secretary General of their agreement at least seven days before the date originally fixed.

Article 4⁵

- a. For each session of the Committee the Secretary General shall draw up a provisional agenda, which he shall transmit to members.
- b. This provisional agenda, which shall be given preliminary examination by the Deputies, shall include:
- i. Any resolutions of the Consultative Assembly^[3] of the kind mentioned in Article 29, paragraphs i, iii and iv of the Statute;
 - ii. Questions, including any draft resolutions, put forward for consideration by a member or by the Secretary General;
 - iii. Intimation of the date and place of the next session of the Committee.

² Amended by the Ministers' Deputies at their 1388th meeting.

³ In February 1994, the Committee of Ministers decided to use in the future the denomination "Parliamentary Assembly" (508th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies).

⁴ The occurrence of an exceptional, unforeseeable event beyond the member States' control which prevents the adherence to the rules applicable under regular circumstances. Examples include, but are not limited to natural disasters, major weather problems, wars and pandemics.

⁵ Amended by the Committee of Ministers at its 23rd Session and by the Ministers' Deputies at their 133rd meeting.

Article 5

The agenda shall be adopted by the Committee at the beginning of the session.

Article 6⁶

Subject to Articles 7 and 8 below, the Chair of the Committee of Ministers shall be held for a six-month term in turn by the representatives of the members in English alphabetical order. The Chair shall pass to a new Chair mid-May and mid-November, at a date to be fixed by the Committee of Ministers based on a joint proposal by the incoming and outgoing Chairs.

Article 7

- a. During the session the Chairman may be replaced as such by another member of his government.
- b. If and as long as the place of the foreign minister entitled to take the Chair is taken by an alternate under the provisions of Article 10 who is not a member of his government, the Chairmanship shall pass to that representative, being a member of his government, who would be taking the Chair next in the order mentioned in the preceding article.

Article 8

If the foreign minister who is entitled to take the Chair at a certain session waives this right, the Chairmanship shall not revert to him at a subsequent session but shall pass on in the order mentioned in Article 6.

Article 9

- a. The Chairman shall guide the discussions, put proposals to the vote and announce decisions.
- b. He may speak and vote, but shall have no casting vote.

Article 10

When a Minister for Foreign Affairs wishes to be replaced by an alternate, in accordance with Article 14 of the Statute, he shall inform the Secretary General of the name and office of his alternate.

Article 11

There shall be a quorum if two-thirds of the representatives of the members are present.

Article 12

- a. English and French shall be the official languages of the Committee.
- b. A representative may speak in any other language, but in that case he shall himself provide for his interpretation into one of the official languages.

Article 13

Any proposal for a resolution must be submitted in writing if any representative so requests. In that case the Chairman shall not put the proposal to the vote until it has been circulated.

⁶ Amended by the Ministers' Deputies at their 934th meeting.

Article 14⁷

- a. Each representative on the Committee of Ministers appoints a Deputy to act on his behalf when the Committee is not in session. The Deputies meet for the purpose of transacting business and recording decisions on behalf of the Committee of Ministers.
- b. The way in which the Deputies' powers shall be exercised and the procedure for their meetings shall be determined by their own Rules of Procedure.

Article 15

Where a recommendation of the Consultative Assembly^[3] is only partially acceptable to the Committee of Ministers, the latter shall refer it back to the President of the Assembly for further consideration and shall at the same time append its comments.

Article 16

Written questions submitted by Representatives to the Assembly in pursuance of the Rules of Procedure of the Consultative Assembly^[3] shall first be examined by the Ministers' Deputies, meeting immediately before the sessions of the Committee of Ministers. The Deputies shall then determine which questions shall be included in the agenda of the Committee of Ministers, and shall decide what other action should be taken.

Article 17^{7]}

- a. The Committee of Ministers may authorise one or more of the representatives on the Committee or any other Minister of a member government to make a statement to the Consultative Assembly^[3] presenting its view on any matter, whether or not it is on the agenda of the Assembly.
- b. The representative, representatives or other Minister chosen shall limit themselves to statements previously approved by the Committee, unless the Committee authorises him or them to take part in the debates in the Assembly on the matter in question.
- c. The President of the Assembly and the Chairman of the Committee of Ministers shall settle the date on which the representatives of the Committee shall be heard by the Assembly.

Article 18⁸

Any representative on the Committee, being a member of the government which he represents, or any other minister of a member government, may speak in the Consultative Assembly^[3], as an individual and in his own name, or any items on the agenda of the Assembly, after obtaining the agreement of the President of the Assembly as to the date on which he shall be heard.

Article 19⁹

The Secretary General shall be present at meetings of the Committee, except during the discussion of any particular question when the Committee has decided otherwise, and shall take part in the debates in an advisory capacity.

Article 20

The Secretary General shall prepare a list of the decisions taken by the Committee and distribute it to members.

⁷ Amended by the Committee of Ministers at its 10th Session.

⁸ Amended by the Committee of Ministers at its 16th Session.

⁹ Amended by the Committee of Ministers at its 23rd Session.

Article 21

- a. The Secretary General shall prepare and submit to the Committee the reports provided for in Article 19 of the Statute. He shall transmit them to members at the same time as the notification of the opening date of the appropriate session of the Committee.
- b. The Committee may also instruct the Secretary General to prepare a report on any question. He shall assemble the material required by the representatives on the Committee and shall distribute it to them.

Article 22

The Secretary General shall be the channel of communication between the Committee and the Consultative Assembly.^[3]

Article 23

The Secretary General shall provide the Committee with the necessary staff, who shall form part of the Secretariat.

Article 24¹⁰

The Secretary General, being responsible to the Committee for the activities of the Secretariat, shall draw up an annual report on these activities, which he shall transmit to members at the same time as the draft budget for the forthcoming year.

Article 25

- a. Consideration of the admission to the Council of a member or associate member must be initiated by a proposal put forward by at least one representative. The proposal must have been included in the agenda of the session at which it is discussed.
- b. Any State which the Committee has decided to invite shall receive through the Secretary General a notification of the invitation extended to it by the Committee. This notification shall set out the number of seats in the Consultative Assembly^[3] to which the prospective member will be entitled, its proportion of the financial contribution and the amount of its contribution to the working capital fund. The Secretary General shall notify the members of the date of deposit of the instrument of accession of the new member.

Article 26

All consideration of the suspension of a member must begin by a proposal for suspension put forward by at least one representative. The proposal must have been included in the agenda of the session at which it is discussed. The member concerned shall receive through the Secretary General a notification of the decision reached in its case. This notification shall set out the legal and financial consequences of the decision.

Article 27

The procedure specified in the preceding article shall be followed in the event of a decision that a member who has been suspended shall cease to be a member or cease to be suspended.

Article 28

The Secretary General shall transmit to the Committee any notice of withdrawal received from a member. The Committee shall discuss it at its next meeting and decide on its legal and financial consequences, which shall be notified to the member concerned by the Secretary General.

¹⁰ Amended by the Ministers' Deputies at their 73rd meeting.