

Doc. 16226
21 July 2025

Election of the Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Communication
Committee of Ministers

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I. Letter from the President of the Ministers' Deputies to the President of the Parliamentary Assembly dated 7 July 2025



COMMITTEE
OF MINISTERS
COMITÉ
DES MINISTRES



Presidency of Malta
Council of Europe
May - November 2025

Présidence de Malte
Conseil de l'Europe
Mai - Novembre 2025

Mr Theodoros Rousopoulos
President of the Parliamentary Assembly
Council of Europe

Ref ► *SecCM/OUT(2025)106e*

► Strasbourg, 7 July 2025

Dear President,

I have the honour to refer to the procedure for the appointment of the Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly and to inform you that, at their 1533rd meeting on 3 July 2025, the Ministers' Deputies adopted the attached Resolution transmitting to the Assembly the following nomination:

- Dr Despina Chatzivassiliou

Yours sincerely,

Francesca Camilleri Vettiger
President of the Ministers' Deputies

Enclosed: CM/Res(2025)1

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II. **Resolution CM/Res(2025)1 on the appointment to the post of Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly**

(adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 3 July 2025 at the 1 533rd meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)

The Committee of Ministers, under the Regulations relating to the appointment of the Secretary General, Deputy Secretary General and Secretary General of the Assembly having the rank of Deputy Secretary General,

Having taken note of the letter addressed to the Secretary General by ten representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly and by the Government of the Hellenic Republic, proposing the election of Dr Despina Chatzivassiliou as Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly;

Having held an exchange of views with the candidate;

Having consulted the representatives of the Assembly in the Joint Committee on 23 June 2025,

Decided to submit to the Parliamentary Assembly, for appointment to the post of Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly, for a five-year term starting on 1 March 2026, the following candidature:

- Dr Despina Chatzivassiliou.

III. **Candidature of Ms Despina Chatzivassiliou**

The Secretariat recalls that, on 5 February 2025 (1 518th meeting of the Deputies, item 1.6), the Deputies adopted the timetable concerning the procedure for the election of the Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly. In that timetable, 5 May 2025 was fixed as the closing date for the submission of candidates and 18 June 2025 (1 532nd meeting of the Deputies) was fixed as the date for the preliminary examination of candidatures and interview of candidates by the Deputies.

On 25 April 2025, the Secretary General forwarded to the Committee of Ministers the candidature of Dr Despina Chatzivassiliou, the current Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly.

The Secretary General appended to that communication a copy of the joint letter sent to him on 6 April 2025 by the following members of the Assembly in which they proposed the candidature of Dr Chatzivassiliou:

- Mr Theodoros Rousopoulos, President of the Parliamentary Assembly
- Mr Frank Schwabe, President of the Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group (SOC), Germany
- Mr Pablo Hispán, President of the Groupe of the European People's Party (EPP), Spain
- Mr Zsolt Németh, President of the Group of the European Conservatives, Patriots & Affiliates (ECPA), Hungary
- Mr Iulian Bulai, President of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE), Romania
- Ms Elisabetta Gardini, ECPA, Chair of the Italian Delegation
- Ms Petra Bayr, SOC, Austria, Chair CHD Committee
- Ms Ingrid Schou, EPP, Norway, Chair of the Norwegian Delegation
- Ms Laura Castel, Chair of the United European Left (UEL), Spain
- Ms Yevheniia Kravchuk, Vice-Chair of ALDE, Ukraine

The same day, the Secretary General forwarded the letter of 8 April 2025 signed by Mr George Gerapetritis, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Hellenic Republic, submitting, on behalf of the Government of the Hellenic Republic, the candidature of Dr Despina Chatzivassiliou for the post of Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly. He also forwarded a letter, attached to the letter of Minister Gerapetritis, and signed by Ms Dora Bakoyannis, offering support to this candidature on behalf of the Greek delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly.

Council of Europe
The Secretary General

Strasbourg, 25 April 2025

Dear Ambassador,

In accordance with the Regulations relating to the appointment of the Secretary General Deputy Secretary General and Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly I hereby forward you the letter signed by Mr George Gerapetritis, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Hellenic Republic, submitting, on behalf of the Government of the Hellenic Republic, the candidature of Dr Despina Chatzivassiliou for re-election as Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly.

I also forward a letter signed by Ms Dora Bakoyannis, on behalf of the Greek delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly, and a letter signed by ten members of the Parliamentary Assembly, in support of this candidature.

Yours sincerely,



Alain Berset

Ambassador Patrick Engelberg
Chair of the Ministers Deputies
Permanent Representative of Luxembourg
to the Council of Europe



PERMANENT REPRESENTATION OF GREECE
TO THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

Strasbourg, April 23 2025
APF: 6622/AS 382

Your Excellency,

I have the honour to attach herewith a letter of His Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Hellenic Republic Mr. George Gerapetritis (as well as a copy of a letter addressed to you by Ms Dora Bakoyannis, Chairperson of the Greek delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe), supporting the candidature of Dr Despina Chatzivassiliou for re-election to the post of Secretary General of PACE.

Please accept, your Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a long horizontal stroke followed by a stylized, cursive signature.

Nicolas Sigalas
Ambassador

His Excellency
Mr. Alain Berset
Secretary General of the Council of Europe



THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Athens, April 8th 2025

Ref: E/33

Dear Secretary General,

On behalf of the Greek Government, I have the honour to present the candidature of Dr Despina Chatzivassiliou for re-election to the post of Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

As Secretary General of the Assembly, counting on more than 30 years of professional experience in the Council of Europe and a solid legal background, Dr Chatzivassiliou has demonstrated exceptional knowledge and understanding of the Organisation, as well as political acumen, leadership and strong diplomatic skills. With her guidance, the Parliamentary Assembly continued to function efficiently under the COVID-19 crisis conditions, implemented cost-effective reforms privileging the use of new technologies and, more significantly, successfully navigated through turbulent waters marked by one of the greatest threats to the international order in the Organisation's 75 years history, namely the war of aggression launched by the Russian Federation against Ukraine. In responding to this and other unprecedented domestic challenges, above all a general backsliding of democracy in Europe and increasing inequalities within society, the Parliamentary Assembly worked in a climate of cooperation, trust and intra-institutional dialogue with the Committee of Ministers, the Secretary General and other Council of Europe bodies.

In particular, Dr Chatzivassiliou provided the necessary advice to the President, political group leaders and members of the Parliamentary Assembly and he led the secretariat efforts aiming at the organisation of the Reykjavik Summit of Heads of State and Government and at ensuring subsequently a significant contribution to the preparation and the implementation of the Reykjavik decisions, thus contributing to reinforcing the Organisation's role as guardian of democracy, human rights and the Rule of Law across the continent.

Dr Chatzivassiliou has proven to possess the skills, experience and dedication necessary to continue leading the work of the Parliamentary Assembly effectively,



THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

especially at these tumultuous times. The Greek Government supports her candidature for a second term of office and the same is true for the entire Greek delegation to the Assembly. In this respect, you will find attached the letter addressed to you by the Chairwoman of the Greek delegation to the Assembly, Ms Dora Bakoyannis.

I would therefore be grateful if you could forward Dr Chatzivassiliou's candidature to the Committee of Ministers.

Please accept, dear Secretary General, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'George Gerapetritis'.

George Gerapetritis

*Mr Alain Berset
Secretary General of the Council of Europe*



HELLENIC PARLIAMENT

DORA BAKOYANNIS

**PRESIDENT OF STANDING COMMITTEE
ON NATIONAL DEFENCE AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT – NEW DEMOCRACY**

Athens, 7 April 2025

Mr Alain Berset
Secretary General of the Council of Europe

Dear Secretary General,

It is my honour to express, on behalf of the whole Greek delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, full support to the candidature of Dr Despina Chatzivassiliou for re-election to the post of Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

During her mandate as the Secretary General of our Assembly, Dr Chatzivassiliou, the first woman ever to acquire this position, has not only contributed to a clear improvement of gender equality within our Assembly; she has demonstrated having the expertise, leadership and vision necessary to lead this institution, as well as a genuine commitment to the values of democracy, human rights and the Rule of Law.

The main focus of her work has always been that of strengthening the impact of the Parliamentary Assembly while at the same time promoting intra-institutional dialogue and constructive cooperation with the Committee of Ministers and the Secretary General of the Organisation. By doing this, she reinforced links with national parliaments and ensured that the Parliamentary Assembly could respond effectively to current and emerging challenges, and made its functioning more efficient and cost-effective, including through the use of new technologies and artificial intelligence.

Dr Chatzivassiliou's dedication, integrity and professionalism are greatly valued and appreciated by members of the Parliamentary Assembly and beyond. These qualities have enabled her to gain the trust and respect of parliamentarians, her colleagues and other stakeholders, and to foster a positive environment and a culture of cooperation within the Parliamentary Assembly.

As we look ahead to the challenges and opportunities before us, more than ever, we need a strong, passionate and experienced individual at the helm of our institution. For this reason, the Greek delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly unanimously supports the candidature of Dr Chatzivassiliou for re-election to the post of Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

Please accept, dear Secretary General, the expression of my deepest respect.

Dora BAKOYANNIS



Chairperson of the Greek delegation to PACE

Approved by the members of the Greek delegation

Georgios Stamatidis

Dimitrios Maniatis

Maria Nefeli Chatzivaannidou

Dimitrios Markopoulos

Nina Kassimati

Levy Papadimitriou

Maria Syrengeba

Iouri Oikonomou

Garyfallia (Liana) Kanelli

Euripidis Stylianidis
Alexios Tsipras

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Strasbourg 6 April 2025

Dear Secretary General,

In accordance with the Regulations relating inter alia to the appointment of the Secretary General of the Assembly, we would like to propose Dr Despina Chatzivassiliou, current Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly, to the post of Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly for a second term of office which will start on 1 March 2026 and end on 31 January 2031. You will find appended her curriculum vitae.

We would be most grateful if you could forward this proposal to the Committee of Ministers for preliminary examination and subsequent consideration, on the occasion of the consultation with the Assembly in the Joint Committee, in accordance with the timetable for the procedure for the election of the Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 5 February 2025.

Yours sincerely,

- 1 THEODOROS ROUSOPOULOS PRESIDENT OF PACE
- 2 FRANK SCHUABE President of SOC
- 3 Pablo Trespalmer President of the EPP
- 4 ZSOLT NEMETH PRES. OF ECPA
- 5 BULAI IULIAN President of ALDE
- 6 Elisabetta Gardini ECPA - Chair of Italian Delegation
- 7 Petra BAYER AUT SOC Chair CHD Com.
- 8 Ingrid Schou NOR EPP Chair of Norwegian Delegation
- 9 Laura Castel Fort Chair of UEL
- 10 Yevheniia Kravchuk Vice Chair of ALDE
Ukraine

Mr Alain Berset
Secretary General of the Council of Europe
Palais de l'Europe
Strasbourg

Dr. DESPINA CHATZIVASSILIOU

SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE
SINCE MARCH 2021

CONTACT

00 33 6 08 09 93 46

despina.chatzivassiliou@coe.int

PERSONAL DETAILS

Born in Athens, Greece,

on 28 February 1967

Two children: Ilia and Charles
Tsovilis

LANGUAGES

Greek: mother tongue

English: fluent

French: fluent

Italian: fluent

CAREER IN THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

- Head of Secretariat of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy (2010-2021)
- Secretary of the Ad hoc Committee on the role and mission of the Parliamentary Assembly (first half of 2018)
- Secretary and, as of January 2008, Acting Head of the Secretariat of the Monitoring Committee (2006-2009)
- Co-Secretary of different Assembly's Committees: Political Affairs and Democracy, Legal Affairs and Human Rights, and Monitoring Committee (1994-2000)

INTERGOVERNMENTAL SECTOR

Monitoring Department - Directorate of Strategic Planning

- Deputy Head and, as of April 2005, Acting Head, responsible for the monitoring procedure of the Committee of Ministers (2000-2006)
- Human Resources Correspondent for the Directorate

EUROPEAN COMMISSION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

- Lawyer

PREVIOUS WORK EXPERIENCE

- European University Institute (EUI), Florence, Italy: Research Assistant for Professor Antonio Cassese, former President of the Council of Europe anti-torture Committee (CPT) and of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (1992-1993)
- Law firm A. Chiotellis–I. Yannidis, Athens, Greece: trainee lawyer (1988-1989); as of 1994, member of the Athens Bar Association
- Criminal Law Review, Poenika Chronika, Athens, Greece: member of the editorial board (1986-1993)
- Apollonion Musical School: professor of classical guitar (1984-1988)

EDUCATION

DOCTOR JURIS

- EUI, Florence, Italy - PhD thesis on “Pre-trial Deprivation of Liberty under the European Convention on Human Rights: a critical analysis of the Strasbourg case-law”, under the supervision of Professor Antonio Cassese and Professor Stefan Trechsel, graduated with Honors (summa cum laude) in 1994 following four years of research fellowship

LAW DEGREE

- Law School, University of Athens, graduated with Honors (top of the year) in 1988

SECONDARY EDUCATION

- Scuola Italiana d’Atene and Anavrita, Athens, Greece

MAIN PUBLICATIONS

- Chatzivassiliou, D. (2024). « Droits humains, État de droit et démocratie » (Grand Entretien). In *Confrontations Europe*, (139)
- Together with Heinrich Klebes, « Problèmes d’ordre constitutionnel dans le processus d’adhésion d’États de l’Europe centrale et orientale au Conseil de l’Europe », in *Revue universelle des droits de l’homme* 1996, Vol. 8 N° 8-9, pp. 269-286
- L’adhésion de la Russie au Conseil de l’Europe, « Le Conseil de l’Europe acteur de la recomposition de l’Europe », in *Cahiers de l’Espace Europe* 1997, N° 10, pp. 27-60
- Effectiveness of judicial remedies: an analysis of the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights under Articles 5 and 6, ERA-Forum 4/2004, Academy of European Law (ERA), Trier