

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



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**CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL OF EUROPEAN JUDGES
(CCJE)**

MEMBERSHIP AND WORKING METHODS OF THE CCJE

**as adopted by the CCJE
at its 26th plenary meeting (12-14 November 2025)**

**Membership and working methods of
the Consultative Council of European Judges (CCJE)**

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I. General

1. The rules of the Committee of Ministers governing the operation of intergovernmental committees, which also apply to the CCJE, are set out in Resolution [CM/Res\(2021\)3](#) on intergovernmental committees and subordinate bodies, their terms of reference and working methods. This document is intended to supplement these rules to facilitate the work of the CCJE by taking into account its terms of reference¹ and specificities.

II. Membership

2. According to its terms of reference,² the CCJE is a consultative body composed exclusively of serving judges. Governments of member states shall designate one or more members (preferably one member and one deputy member) amongst serving judges. Members should be chosen in contact, where such authorities exist, with the national authorities responsible for ensuring the independence and impartiality of judges and with the national administration responsible for managing the judiciary, from among serving judges having a thorough knowledge of questions relating to the functioning of the judicial system combined with an utmost personal integrity.
3. The expression “serving judges” shall be understood as persons carrying out judicial duties (such as adjudicating courts cases and presiding over court hearings).
4. Members who have retired or have left their judicial office (i.e. no longer work as a judge) cannot remain members of the CCJE. All members shall therefore immediately notify the secretariat upon retirement or leaving their judicial office. The member state concerned shall appoint a new member fulfilling the criteria set out in the terms of reference of the CCJE, as specified in paragraphs 2 and 3 above.
5. In cases where member states appoint two or more representatives to the CCJE, they shall specify who the member is and who their deputies are. Deputy members shall also fulfil the requirement of being a serving judge (see paragraph 3). The role of a deputy member shall in principle be to replace the member in case of unavailability. In the event of a vote and the presence of both the member and the deputy member, only one vote shall be cast per member state in accordance with Resolution [CM/Res\(2021\)3](#).

¹ CCJE Terms of Reference for 2024-2027 ([CM\(2023\)131-add](#)).

² CCJE Terms of Reference for 2024-2027 ([CM\(2023\)131-add](#)).

6. In exceptional cases, a member may be accompanied, on an ad hoc basis, by another serving judge – other than a deputy member – with particular knowledge of the topic being dealt with in a specific meeting. The President shall be consulted about the participation of this person ahead of the said meeting.
7. The Council of Europe shall only bear the travel and subsistence expenses of the representative designated as member by each member state (two representatives in the case of the state whose member has been elected President – see paragraph 9).
8. The CCJE shall designate a Gender Equality Rapporteur from amongst its members.

III. The President, the Vice-President and the Bureau

9. The Bureau shall be composed of the President, the Vice-President and two members. They shall be elected in their personal capacity and in accordance with Resolution [CM/Res\(2021\)3](#). They shall not be substituted or replaced by another member, including by representatives from the same member state. The meetings of the Bureau shall be held at least twice a year and be attended by its members and the secretariat. In case of unavailability of the President, the Vice-President will replace them. Considerations of gender equality shall be borne in mind when electing the President, the Vice-President and Bureau members.
10. The key functions of the Bureau shall be the following:
 - Ensure continuity in order to guarantee the management of the CCJE between plenary meetings;
 - Contribute to the preparation of documents for adoption by the CCJE, including annual Opinions (see paragraph 16), thematic studies (see paragraph 17), statements, and other relevant documents;
 - Prepare and adopt documents of the Bureau including opinions on national situations, statements and other relevant documents, where the time frame requires it and the CCJE has been informed and delegated this task (see paragraph 18);
 - Undertake any other additional specific tasks as delegated by the CCJE.

IV. The Working Group

11. The Working Group shall be composed of members of the CCJE in respect of nine member states. Members of the Working Group shall be appointed by the CCJE during its plenary meeting. One member from each of these nine member states shall be appointed to the Working Group. Where a CCJE delegation is composed of a member and a deputy member, the deputy member shall act as a substitute should the member be unavailable. Should more than nine CCJE members express interest in being a member of the Working Group, they shall be placed on a reserve list in case a seat is left vacant during one of the meetings of the Working Group. In exceptional cases, a Working Group member may be accompanied, on an ad hoc basis, by another serving judge with particular knowledge of the topic being dealt with in a specific meeting. The President shall be consulted about the participation of this person ahead of the meeting (see paragraph 6).

12. The key function of the Working Group shall be to prepare the draft annual Opinion of the CCJE (see paragraph 16), with a view to an examination and adoption by the CCJE at its plenary meeting.
13. The Working Group can hold an indicative discussion on possible topics for future Opinions and thematic studies and other issues for decision by the CCJE (see paragraph 17).
14. The meetings of the Working Group shall be held twice a year and be attended by its members, as well as Bureau members, the Gender Equality Rapporteur, the secretariat and a scientific expert appointed by the Council of Europe for the purpose of supporting the drafting of the annual Opinions.
15. In exceptional cases and upon approval of the President, the Working Group may invite to a meeting other participants for the purpose of an exchange of views on the topic of the annual Opinion under consideration.
16. The Council of Europe shall bear the travel and subsistence expenses of the members of the Bureau, the Gender Equality Rapporteur and the nine members of the Working Group.

V. Deliverables

17. According to its terms of reference,³ the main deliverable of the CCJE shall be the annual Opinions on issues related to the independence, impartiality of judges and other aspects of a fair trial, competence, nomination, career, ethics, accountability, evaluation or other aspects of career of judges or judicial profession. The topic of the Opinion of the following year shall be decided by the CCJE during its plenary meeting.
18. The CCJE shall also produce, in principle on a biennial basis, thematic studies covering identified or emerging issues of common interest as regards the independence, impartiality and competence of judges, as well as their status, career and effective exercise of the judicial profession, other aspects of a fair trial, challenges and good practices. The topic of the thematic studies shall be decided by the CCJE during its plenary meetings.
19. The CCJE shall also produce opinions or other texts concerning the specific situation of judges at the request of the Committee of Ministers or other bodies of the Council of Europe, such as the Secretary General or the Parliamentary Assembly, or at the request of member states, CCJE members and observers, judicial bodies or relevant associations of judges, providing targeted expert advice to enable states to comply with the Council of Europe's standards related to judges.
20. Where such requests are received and the CCJE had entrusted the Bureau with dealing with them at its plenary meeting (in particular opinions on national situations), the Bureau shall make a preliminary assessment on whether further action is needed and, where necessary, prepare a text, based on the standards

³ CCJE Terms of Reference for 2024-2027 ([CM\(2023\)131-add](#)), section on main deliverables.

laid down by the CCJE, and adopt it as a Bureau document in response to the said request. The Bureau shall inform the CCJE of the publication of any such document. Having regard to the time frame for preparing such documents and their nature, the Bureau may decide to consult the CCJE on the final draft via an electronic consultation with a view to its publication as a CCJE document (see also paragraph 10).

21. For all other requests, the Bureau shall make a preliminary assessment and consult the CCJE to decide on further action. Having regard to the time frame and the nature of the document, the CCJE may entrust the Bureau with the completion of the document, which will be published as a Bureau document, or decide to validate the draft document prepared by the Bureau via an electronic consultation before its publication as a CCJE document (see also paragraph 10).
22. Where the CCJE is invited by the President of the European Court of Human Rights (the Court) to make a third party intervention in a given case, in accordance with Article 36 of the European Convention on Human Rights, the Bureau shall consult the CCJE to decide on further action. The CCJE shall entrust the Bureau with the preparation of a draft text which shall be adopted by the CCJE before being submitted to the Court. Depending on the time frame, the final text shall be adopted by the CCJE during its plenary meeting or via an electronic consultation.
23. During all stages of preparation of these deliverables and until their final adoption and publication, they shall remain confidential and not be distributed to any person other than the members and observers of the CCJE.