

Rule 1/2026 on the declaration of interests

The Secretary General of the Council of Europe,

HAVING REGARD to Article I of the Staff Regulations and the corresponding Staff Rule on duties, obligations and privileges;

HAVING REGARD to the Code of Conduct;

CONSIDERING that the existing procedure of declaration of interests in the context of procurement and grant awards should be expanded to cover all Secretariat members and no longer be limited to the context of procurement and grant awards, in line with the provisions of the aforementioned Staff Rule relating to conflict of interest;

RECALLING the requirements of the Regulations on the protection of personal data;

HAVING CONSULTED the Staff Committee in accordance with Article 13.4 of the Staff Regulations;

D E C I D E S:

Article 1 – Definitions

For the purposes of the declaration of interests:

- “Designated persons” are all permanent, temporary and locally recruited staff of the Council of Europe, Secretaries and assistants of political groups of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, seconded officials and trainees, as well as the Secretary General, the Deputy Secretary General, and the Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly.
- “Personal interests” include any liability of, and any advantage, in the form of occupational, membership, significant business or financial interest, to a person to whom this Rule applies, or a close relative of, or person in a close personal relationship with, a person to whom this Rule applies. “Personal interests” also include the fact of having a close personal relationship with, or being a close relative of, a person involved in Council of Europe activities.
- “Significant business or financial interest” means any form of ownership in, control of or financial relationship with a private entity or asset that may result in personal financial gain – whether directly or indirectly – where such interest represents 1% or more ownership or generates income or value exceeding EUR 10,000 per year.
- A “close relative” means a spouse, partner, ex-spouse or former partner; parent, child or sibling, including through marriage or partnership; grandparent, grandchild, aunt, uncle or cousin.
- A “close personal relationship” can include a romantic or intimate relationship, friendship or social bond characterised by private interactions, shared confidences, and mutual loyalty.

- “Involved in Council of Europe activities” means being in, or seeking to enter, a legal relationship with the Council of Europe, such as an employment relationship, contract, framework contract or framework agreement for the supply of goods, works, or services (including intellectual services), or a grant agreement; participating in Council of Europe bodies or activities, for instance as government representative, expert or consultant, member of a permanent representation or a representative of civil society; or having recourse to legal remedies which are provided by Council of Europe bodies and are available to persons who are not Secretariat members.
- “Conflicts of interest” arise where a designated person has a personal interest which is such as to influence, or appear to influence, the impartial and objective performance of their duties.

Article 2 – Declaration of interests

2.1 All designated persons shall, on an annual basis, either declare any personal interests they might have that give rise to an actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest or confirm that they have no such interests.

2.2 The focus of the annual declaration procedure shall be personal interests of designated persons, as well as personal interests of close relatives of or persons in a close personal relationship with designated persons, in respect of persons or entities involved in Council of Europe activities.

2.3 Heads of Major Administrative Entities may, in consultation with the Ethics Officer, specify additional requirements for the declaration of interests by designated persons within their Major Administrative Entity, where such requirements are necessary to manage specific risks arising in the context of that Major Administrative Entity’s activities.

2.4 The declaration of a personal interest in conformity with the present Rule does not exempt a designated person from the obligation to inform their manager, or other person or body as appropriate, should the personal interest become relevant in the context of a specific decision-making procedure.

Article 3 – Procedure

3.1 Declarations of interests must be submitted every year by 31 March. Designated persons who are appointed, or begin a traineeship or secondment, in the course of the year shall submit their declaration within one month of having taken up their function.

3.2 Declarations of interests must be updated promptly, at any point in the year, should there be any change in the situation or personal interests of the designated person that may affect their declaration.

3.3 Declarations and updates to declarations of interests must be made using the relevant procedure and online form, which is designed to identify only those personal interests which risk influencing, or appearing to influence, the impartial and objective performance of the designated person’s duties. It is also designed to limit the collection of personal data to what is strictly necessary for the purposes of managing conflicts of interest.

3.4 The online form referred to in the foregoing paragraph is submitted to the Ethics Office. The declaration of interests of the Ethics Officer must be submitted to the Deputy Secretary General, who shall review it, with the support of the Internal Control Officer if necessary.

3.5 The Ethics Officer, with support from the Internal Control Officer, shall conduct a risk-based review of all declarations to identify and assess any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest which might require management. This review shall take account of factors including the designated person's role, decision-making authority, and capacity to influence others; the importance of maintaining independence in the designated person's role; the public visibility of the role; and the nature and significance of the personal interest, as well as its relevance to the role.

3.6 The Ethics Officer may follow up on the review process mentioned in the foregoing paragraph, by *inter alia* seeking clarification from the designated person, proposing measures to manage risks of conflict of interest, or giving advice on the management of declared interests.

3.7 Following review by the Ethics Officer, the proposed management measures require the approval of a designated person's manager.

3.8 The Ethics Officer and the Internal Control Officer may carry out checks throughout the year to verify that management measures agreed in respect of a declared interest are being adhered to and are functioning effectively.

Article 4 - Storage and access

4.1 All declarations of interests including, where relevant, management measures, shall be stored securely and retained in accordance with the applicable retention policy.

4.2 The following persons shall have access to the declarations of interests and, where relevant, management measures, as described below:

- 4.2.1 Managers shall have access to the declarations of those Secretariat members in respect of whom they have hierarchical authority.
- 4.2.2 Heads of Office or Heads of Operation of a Council of Europe office located outside of Strasbourg shall have access to the declarations of those Secretariat members assigned to that office.
- 4.2.3 The staff of the Ethics Office and the Internal Control Officer shall have access to all declarations, for the purposes of carrying out the duties set out in this Rule.

Article 5 – Information and guidance

5.1 Any person to whom the present Rule applies may discuss any difficulty arising from the Rule's implementation with their direct manager. They may also, or alternatively, seek guidance on all matters covered by the Rule from the Ethics Officer.

5.2 All Commitments Officers and Cost Centre Managers shall ensure that the designated persons within their cost centres are informed of their obligation to declare their interests.

5.3 The Ethics Officer shall submit a report on the annual declaration of interests exercise to the Deputy Secretary General by 30 June at the latest. The aim of this report shall be to provide assurance that actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest arising from declared interests have been documented, and that management measures have been put in place to the satisfaction of the Ethics Officer.

Article 6 - Non-compliance

Failure to comply with the obligation to submit a complete and truthful declaration of interests may result in disciplinary action. Two calendar months after the annual deadline referred to in Article 3.1 above, the Ethics Officer shall transmit a list of designated persons who, despite reminders, have not submitted their declarations of interest, to the Directorate of Internal Oversight for action within their remit.

Article 7 – Final provisions

7.1 This Rule shall enter into force on 1 February 2026. As from the same date, Rule No. 1282 of 18 October 2007 on the declaration of interests in the context of procurement and grant award, as amended, shall be repealed.

7.2 The deadline referred to in Article 3.1 above may if necessary be extended, in respect of 2026, by decision of the Director General of Administration, but shall not be extended beyond 1 July 2026.

Strasbourg, 29 January 2026
The Secretary General
Alain BERSSET