



Appendix 17

Zonta International and the Council of Europe

(updated 13 October 2018)

The Council of Europe¹ is an organization of European countries.

(Sources: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/European-law#ref992078>, and www.zonta.org/tools)

The Council of Europe was founded on 5 May 1949 in London. The pioneers were Winston Churchill and Ernest Bevin (UK), Konrad Adenauer (Federal Republic of Germany), Robert Schumann (France), Paul-Henri Spaak (Belgium), and Alcide de Gasperi (Italy).

The Treaty of London was signed by Belgium, Denmark, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom and Ireland. Headquarters of Council of Europe are in Strasbourg, France. When the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe disappeared after the Fall of the Berlin Wall, the Council of Europe significantly expanded its membership. As of 2018, there were 47 member-states.

The Council of Europe seeks to protect democracy and addresses issues of common concern to its members – all sovereign states – such as human rights, crime prevention, drug abuse, environmental protection, bioethical issues, and migration.

The Council of Europe has established several special bodies and expert committees including the European Commission of Human Rights and the European Court of Human Rights.

Structure of Council of Europe:

- The Committee of Ministers (decision-making body)
- The Parliamentary Assembly (deliberative body)
- The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (consultative body)

¹ The Council of Europe should not be confused with the European Council, which is a policy-making body of the European Union

- The Conference of INGOs (consultative body, participatory status)

The Conference of INGOs is Zonta International's point of contact with the Council of Europe. Karin Nordmeyer, Zonta Club of Freiburg–Schauinsland, Germany served as Zonta's representative at the Council of Europe and committee chairman from 2002 to 2016, when she was succeeded by Anita Schnetzer-Spranger, Zonta Club of Mainz (2016–2020).

1983: Zonta International was granted consultative status with Council of Europe and joined the INGOs.

2003: The INGOs' consultative status was upgraded to participatory status.

2005: The term "Conference of INGOs" has been used since 2005 for the plenary session of all INGOs with participatory status

2012: Major internal reform was completed

Participatory status is granted by the Committee of Ministers of Council of Europe after consultation. To be given this status, the INGOs concerned must be:

- representative in a field of competence or action of the Council of Europe
- present in a significant number of European countries
- able to develop co-operation between players
- capable of contributing actively to Council of Europe deliberations and activities
- able to make known the work of the Council of Europe among European citizens.

The INGOs therefore contribute actively to the decision-making process, the preparation of European legal instruments such as the "Istanbul Convention", and their implementation. They help to expand the co-operation between the Council of Europe and the voluntary sector in its member states, making sure that its various organs respond to the expectations of all Europeans

Zonta International's involvement has included the following:

- participation in Council of Europe campaigns such as *Not for sale* and *Stop domestic violence against women* 2006–2008
- participation in Committee work, such as Parliamentary Committee Equal Opportunities for Women and Men and in the Steering Committee on gender equality
- appointment as chairman of the INGO Gender Equality Group and, in that capacity, speaking in several seminars and conferences, mostly about the implementation of democratic and human rights standards in Eastern European Countries
- participation in Ministerial Conferences such as the 7th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Equality between Women and Men, Baku, 24–25 May 2010. General theme – Gender equality: bridging the gap between *de jure* and *de facto* equality
- entitlement to lodge a collective complaint with the Revised Social Charter (CETS 163).

The convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings was opened for signature in 2005 and entered into force on 1 February 2008. As of February 2017, 45 member-states had ratified the convention. Zontians can use the Anti Trafficking Convention as a tool for advocacy.

The Istanbul Convention was signed on 11 May 2011 in Turkey and came into force on 1 August 2014. It is the most far-reaching international Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence. It aims for zero tolerance. The cornerstones of the convention are: preventing violence, protecting victims and prosecuting perpetrators.