

## Introduction to The Council of Europe

The Council of Europe (CoE) stands as a beacon of unity and human rights in a continent once torn by conflict. Founded on May 5, 1949, in the aftermath of World War II, it emerged from a visionary idea: to prevent future atrocities by fostering cooperation among European nations. Ten founding members, including France, the United Kingdom, and Belgium, signed the Treaty of London, establishing the CoE in Strasbourg, France—a symbolic location bridging Western Europe.

Unlike the European Union, the CoE isn't about economic integration but rather safeguarding democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. Today, it unites 46 member states, stretching from Iceland to Turkey, representing over 700 million people. Its mission crystallized with the European Convention on Human Rights in 1950, a groundbreaking treaty that gave citizens the power to hold governments accountable through the European Court of Human Rights.

The CoE's work touches everyday lives—whether through banning the death penalty across its members, protecting free speech, or promoting cultural diversity. Its key institutions, like the Parliamentary Assembly and the Committee of Ministers, bring together delegates to debate and shape policies that ripple across borders.

Why does it matter? In a world facing new challenges—migration, disinformation, and inequality—the CoE remains a steady voice for justice and collaboration. It's not a perfect system, but its legacy is undeniable: a Europe more peaceful and rights-focused than ever before.

