

# Election of the new Council of Europe **COMMISSIONER for HUMAN RIGHTS**

at the Council of Europe



## WHAT IS THE Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights at the Council of Europe?

The Council of Europe (CoE) Commissioner for Human Rights is an independent; and impartial; non-judicial institution and one of the most important posts within the CoE system. Its mandate revolves around the promotion of awareness of and respect for human rights in the 46 member states.

## HOW DOES the election process evolve?

The Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights is elected by the Parliamentary Assembly for a term of office of six years from a list of three candidates drawn up by the Committee of Ministers. On 23 November 2023 the Ministers' Deputies decided via secret ballot on three candidates: Manfred Nowak, Meglena Kuneva and Michael O'Flaherty.

Now, it is up to the Assembly's plenary to elect one of the three candidates in its winter plenary session on 23 January 2024, in Strasbourg. The Assembly consists of 306 representatives from all member states. Eligible to vote in the election are those who physically attend the Session on 23 January.

## AT A GLANCE

### THE POSITION

- independent
- impartial
- non-judicial

### ELECTION PROCESS

- elected by the Parliamentary Assembly
- for 6 years
- on the 23 January 2024
- from a list of 3 candidates:
  - Manfred Nowak
  - Meglena Kuneva
  - Michael O'Flaherty

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## **HOW TO FIND INFORMATION on the candidates?**

Here one can find the announcement of the shortlist of three candidates for the post of Council of Europe Human Rights Commissioner by the Committee of Ministers. Here one can find the report by the Assembly's Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights after its assessment of the shortlisted candidates. Find more about the Austrian independent human rights expert and Secretary General of the Global Campus of Human Rights, Manfred Nowak, here and contact Mia Krieghofer for any further questions.

Further information on the Irish candidate Michael O'Flaherty and for the Bulgarian candidate Meglana Kuneva.



**Meglana Kuneva**



**Manfred Nowak**



**Michael O'Flaherty**

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## **WHAT IS AT STAKE with the next term of the Commissioner for Human Rights at the Council of Europe?**

The next six years of the term of office of the CoE Commissioner for Human Rights are decisive: We are facing the most urgent global human rights problems and challenges due to the triple planetary crisis (climate change, nature and biodiversity loss, and pollution), *wars* in Europe and frozen conflicts that are at risk of escalating. At the same time, we have to think about a further development of Human Rights with regard to the fast new social developments (*artificial intelligence*) and to protect Human Rights of future generations (triple planetary crisis and *youth*).

There is a close nexus between Democracy and Human Rights. Liberal, pluralistic, Democracy is challenged by extremism and illiberal concepts. Therefore, the fight for and development of Human Rights is a service to our democracies.

The CoE has been a pioneer in the protection of human rights since its foundation – thus the CoE Commissioner for Human Rights must be at the forefront of making sure that the root causes of these challenges are addressed and the core values of a pluralist, liberal democracy, human rights and the rule of law are upheld.

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## WHAT IS NEXT?

### THE WEBINAR

**DATE:** January 17th 2:00-3:30 pm

**BY:** CURE – Campaign to Uphold Rights in Europe and the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe

**REGISTRATION:** [HERE](#)

### AND THEN



## HOW TO GET ACTIVE?

The mandate of the Commissioner for Human Rights is directly linked to the important work of civil society. Civil society plays a crucial role in deciding who will be the next CoE Commissioner for Human Rights, which priorities will be set and how challenges are to be tackled. Your voice will be heard:

- members of civil society can get in touch with the candidates
- address the members of the Parliamentary Assembly directly (see list of representatives [here](#))
- submit information to the Secretariats of the political Groups (see [here](#)) and
- promote their preferred candidate within their networks.

## What is the most important **UPCOMING EVENT?**

On January 17th from 2:00-3:30 pm, [CURE – Campaign to Uphold Rights in Europe](#) and the [Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe](#) are organizing their traditional Webinar with the three shortlisted candidates for Human Rights Commissioner. All civil society actors can register for this online session [here](#) and make their voices heard.

The election will take place on 23 January, 2024 in the winter plenary session of the Parliamentary Assembly, in Strasbourg. Only those parliamentary representatives who attend the session on Tuesday are eligible to vote.