Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Resolution 2684 (2026)[1]

Improving the selection and election procedure of CPT members

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The absolute prohibition of torture and inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, set out in Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ETS No. 5), is one of the core values of the Council of Europe and a non-derogable right. The Parliamentary Assembly reiterates that this principle must be respected without exception, even in the most difficult circumstances and even in time of war.

2. The European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (ETS No. 126, "the Convention") and the work of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) play a fundamental role in preventing and eradicating torture and inhuman or degrading treatment across Council of Europe member States and are widely regarded as one of the Organisation's greatest achievements.

3. The Assembly congratulates the CPT for its outstanding work and dedication for over 35 years. This work has been made possible thanks to the Convention's unique preventive mechanism which gives the CPT unhindered access to places of detention in all Council of Europe member States, and the possibility to interview persons deprived of their liberty in private. Since the CPT was established in 1989, the Assembly has consistently supported its work, taking its conclusions and recommendations into account in numerous reports and resolutions.

4. The effectiveness and authority of the CPT depend on the professional expertise, independence, impartiality and availability of its members. The Assembly has a particular responsibility in the process leading to the election of CPT members, by ensuring that national delegations propose qualified and independent candidates to the Assembly and by establishing an order of preference to be transmitted to the Committee of Ministers, which is the organ that ultimately elects a CPT member in respect of each State Party.

5. The Assembly recalls its earlier texts on the CPT, in particular Resolution 1248 (2001) "European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT): composition of the Committee", Resolution 1540 (2007) "Improving selection procedures for CPT members" and Resolution 2160 (2017) "25 years of the CPT: achievements and areas for improvement". It notes that, since 2007, the Assembly's practice has evolved and consolidated, while national selection procedures have significantly improved, including through the wider use of public calls, interviews of shortlisted candidates, more balanced selection bodies, more frequent involvement of the national delegation to the Assembly and greater attention to the assessment of candidates' language skills. However, it observes that practice remains uneven and that in some States selection procedures still fall short of the fairness and transparency requirements set by the Assembly's previous resolutions.

1. *Text adopted by the Standing Committee*, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 27 November 2026 (see Doc. 16509, report of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, rapporteur: Ms Octavie Modert).
See Recommendation 2317 (2026).
Provisional version subject to editorial review.

6. With regard to national selection procedures, and building on good practices identified in recent years, the Assembly calls on the national delegations to the Assembly and, where applicable, governments of member States to:

6.1. organise an open, adequately publicised call for candidatures, accessible to all suitably qualified persons, using a wide range of dissemination channels (including official journals, government and parliamentary websites, professional associations, civil society organisations and social media), and ensure that the application period is not less than one month;

6.2. ensure that the selection body has a balanced composition, including representatives of the national delegation to the Assembly, representatives of relevant governmental bodies and ministries (for example, justice, interior, health or foreign affairs) and independent experts with relevant experience (for example, in national human rights institutions, ombudsperson office, the judiciary, civil society or academia); national delegations to the Assembly should play an active role in the selection process;

6.3. systematically organise interviews of shortlisted candidates by the selection body; failure to do so should, in principle, lead to the rejection of the list by the Assembly;

6.4. ensure that candidates' language skills are effectively assessed, including by conducting part of the interview in one or both official languages of the Council of Europe and/or by involving language experts;

6.5. provide, together with the list of three candidates, a detailed description of the national selection procedure followed, including the composition of the selection body, the modalities of the public call, the assessment criteria used, the use of interviews and language assessment;

6.6. co-operate fully with the Assembly and its Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights by submitting lists of candidates in due time, and by responding promptly to requests for additional information.

7. As regards the criteria for the selection and election of CPT members, the Assembly:

7.1. calls on national delegations to the Assembly and governments of member States to pay due attention to the professional profiles needed by the CPT at the time of the call, including, for example, prison and forensic doctors, civil psychiatrists and persons with experience in prison management or policing, and ensure that all candidates proposed possess the necessary resilience, physical and psychological fitness to participate in on-site visits and are genuinely available to devote at least approximately 40 days per year to the work of the CPT;

7.2. clarifies that lists of candidates should, as a rule, include at least one man and one woman, except when all candidates on the list are of the sex under-represented in the CPT (less than 40% of the total number of CPT members); a list that does not conform to this rule shall be rejected by the Assembly, save in exceptional circumstances when the State concerned has taken all the necessary and appropriate steps to ensure that the list contains candidates of both sexes; national selection bodies should give preference, in cases of equal merit, to candidates of the sex under-represented in the CPT;

7.3. recalls its long-standing requirements regarding the independence and impartiality of candidates and clarifies that member States should refrain from nominating sitting members of the Assembly or persons whose national parliamentary or governmental responsibilities would prevent them from maintaining the appearance of independence and impartiality required and/or from being sufficiently available for CPT work;

7.4. recalls that, for the purposes of interpreting Article 4.3 of the Convention, dual nationals holding the nationality of the State presenting the list and that of another member State may stand as candidates and be elected to the CPT.

8. With regard to its own procedure, the Assembly decides to further develop and clarify its practice as follows:

8.1. lists of candidates shall be examined on the basis of the documents submitted by national delegations (curricula vitae and detailed information on the national selection procedure, including the composition of the national selection body, interviews and language assessments); national delegations to the Assembly shall be invited to present a list orally before the Sub-Committee on Human Rights only where there is a genuine issue to be clarified on procedural or substantive grounds;

8.2. in exceptional circumstances, as set out in paragraph 7.2, the Sub-Committee on Human Rights may accept single-sex lists of candidates belonging to the sex that is not under-represented in the CPT; such an exception to the general rule shall require the support of a two-thirds majority of the votes cast by the members of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights and shall in any case be subject to ratification by the Bureau of the Assembly;

8.3. the recommendation on the order of preference transmitted to the Bureau and then to the Committee of Ministers shall be accompanied by succinct reasons for such order, including, where appropriate, an indication that one or two candidates are considered to be significantly more qualified than the other(s);

8.4. once the deadline set by the Assembly for the submission of the lists has expired, national delegations shall not be authorised to withdraw or modify their list, except in cases where a candidate withdraws. In such cases, the procedure shall be suspended and the delegation invited to complete the list by replacing the candidate who has withdrawn;

8.5. in respect of States Parties to the Convention that are not member States of the Council of Europe, the Bureau of the Assembly shall invite the parliament concerned to put forward three candidates, in accordance with Article 5, paragraph 1, of the Convention; where that parliament enjoys observer or partnership for democracy status with the Assembly, the procedure before the Assembly should, as far as possible, follow the same features and requirements applicable to member States;

8.6. in respect of member States which, for a prolonged period, have no delegation in the Assembly due to the non-submission or non-ratification of credentials, the invitation to submit lists of candidates should be addressed directly to the national parliament concerned, and the procedure should, as far as possible, continue its course before the Assembly and the Committee of Ministers;

8.7. the Secretary General of the Assembly should publish a consolidated information document reflecting the revised procedure relating to the examination of lists of candidates to the CPT and the requirements on the selection and election procedures.

9. The Assembly invites the CPT to continue its close co-operation with the Assembly, in particular by informing it, through its Bureau and secretariat, of the professional profiles most needed at a given time, of the availability and work of incumbent CPT members seeking re-election, of its preferences or views on lists of candidates, and of its views on possible improvements to the selection and election procedures.