

Q&A session with the candidates for the CoE Deputy Secretary General: “How to Make the Council of Europe More Effective?”

18 June 2026, 15.00 – 16.30 CEST (online)

On **23 June 2026**, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (CoE) will elect the new **Deputy Secretary General** (DSG) of the Organisation.

DSG is a crucial position in the CoE structure. The position involves supporting the Secretary General's reform agenda, shaping the Organisation's programme and budget, and ensuring its maximal impact in promoting democracy, human rights and the rule of law. In the current political context, the DSG can play an important role in maintaining a strong and effective CoE, strengthening dialogue with civil society, and supporting key initiatives such as the New Democratic Pact.

The [Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe](#) and [CURE – Campaign to Uphold Rights in Europe](#) invite you to an online exchange with the two shortlisted candidates for this key position in the CoE's leadership:

H.E. Tanja Gonggrijp, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the CoE
Ms. Marja Ruotanen-Bourdages, CoE Director General of Democracy and Human Dignity

At a time of growing instability, democratic backsliding and increasing pressure on the European human rights system, this session will give civil society actors an opportunity to hear directly from the Candidates about their vision for the role of the DSG and the future direction of the CoE, including their answers to the following questions:

- What steps would they take to increase the effectiveness of the CoE?
- How would they make the organisation more capable of scaling up activities in response to instances of rapid democratic backsliding?
- How do they see the further development of the New Democratic Pact, and what needs to be done so it leads to more effective democracy protection in Europe?
- How do they envision the further development of meaningful engagement of the CoE with civil society?

Moderator:

Goran Miletic, Member of the Standing Committee of the Conference of INGOs, CURE Steering Committee Member, Founder of the Balkans Forward Foundation

Join us online on 18 June 2026 from 15:00-16:30 CEST. Simultaneous interpretation into French will be provided.

The registration is open **until 15 June 2026** [here](#).

Should you have any questions or considerations, please do not hesitate to contact us at info@cure-campaign.org.