The Council of Europe

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Founded in the aftermath of the Second World War, the Council of Europe is Europe's oldest political organisation. The organisation's founding act, the **Statute of the Council of Europe**, was signed in London on 5 May 1949. According to the Preamble, the aim of its members is the pursuit of peace based upon justice and international cooperation, the safeguarding of the principles of freedom, democracy and the rule of law and the promotion of social and economic progress.

The structure and the powers and responsibilities of the Council of Europe, which has two main bodies: a **consultative assembly** and a **committee of Ministers**, are the result of a compromise between those who favour a federalist model of European integration and the unionists, who, seeking not to interfere with state sovereignty, prefer no more than intergovernmental cooperation.