



29 May 2009

**STATEMENT**  
**BY THE STANDING COMMITTEE**

Ljubljana, 29 May 2009

1. At its meeting on 12 May 2009, the Committee of Ministers decided to transmit to the Parliamentary Assembly a list of two candidates for the election of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, despite the request by the Assembly contained in a resolution adopted during the April 2009 part-session, to be able to choose among the four existing candidates.
2. The Assembly will discharge its statutory responsibility to elect the next Secretary General as soon as realistically possible.
3. However, for the following procedural reasons, the Standing Committee disagrees with the decision by the Committee of Ministers:
  - i. the change in the procedure by the Ministers' Deputies during the period of submission of candidatures;
  - ii. the adoption by the Ministers' Deputies on 23 April of a draft resolution restricting the number of candidates which effectively pre-empted the possibility of genuine consultation of the Assembly through the Joint Committee on 29 April 2009;
  - iii. the use of the so-called "Juncker criteria", to eliminate two candidates from the short-list;
  - iv. the failure of the Committee of Ministers to give reasons for its choice.
4. Moreover such a short-list deprives the Assembly of a political choice since both remaining candidates are of a similar political orientation.
5. In these circumstances, the Standing Committee is not in favour of accepting, in its current form, the proposal of the Committee of Ministers as it limits the possibility to proceed with the election of the Secretary General at the June part session. The Standing Committee therefore believes that the Committee of Ministers and the Assembly must urgently engage in a dialogue in order to avoid an institutional crisis.
6. The Standing Committee is of the opinion that there has been no real consultation between the Assembly and the Committee of Ministers, in the process for electing the Secretary General, as foreseen in the Rules.
7. The Standing Committee considers that the new Secretary General should enjoy the support of both organs of the Council of Europe.
8. There is a consensus within the Assembly on the need for both organs of the Council of Europe to progress together to resolve such issues in a spirit of co-operation and dialogue.
9. The Standing Committee therefore believes that a period of reflection and joint discussion is necessary before the election takes place and therefore confirms the willingness of its Presidential Committee to engage in a dialogue with the Committee of Ministers, preferably before the June 2009 part session.