

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN RABBIS PROTOCOL

A. INTRODUCTION

The Conference of European Rabbis (CER) represents Orthodox Judaism. It unites Orthodox community rabbis to collaborate effectively in passing the tradition onto the next generations of European Jewry. This unity protects our religious rights, represents the interests of Judaism in general as well as the interests of European Jewry, in particular in European governments and institutions.

B. MEMBERSHIP

In order to qualify as a member of the CER, candidates need to fulfil the following criteria:

1. Be ordained (receive Smicha) by a recognised Orthodox rabbi or a recognised Orthodox institution
2. Believe in the Thirteen Principles of Jewish Faith
3. Have full commitment to the Jewish law and customs and live by upholding them
4. To currently be living/working in Europe, or to have previously spent substantial time in Europe
5. To be engaged in a rabbinical position – either full time or part time. Alternatively, a candidate who held a rabbinical position or a Torah teaching position in a European community
6. The services in the Shul which the candidate heads follow the Halacha as defined by the CER Standing Committee
7. Fill in the CER application form including reference letters as requested
8. Pay the CER membership fees in a timely manner
9. Have no criminal record

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

The checks to ensure whether a candidate meets the prerequisite criteria in order to qualify as a CER member will be conducted by the Membership Committee, as selected by the CER Standing Committee.

In case of a refusal by the Membership Committee, a candidate is entitled to appeal the decision to the CER Standing Committee within 14 days of receiving the decision.

As may be required and following much consideration, the Membership Committee will advise the CER Standing Committee on termination of CER membership based on the Protocol.

C. MEMBERSHIP SERVICES PROVIDED

1. Ordination to Rabbinate
2. Assistance with rabbinical posts within European communities
3. Approval of rabbis qualified to issue Kashrut certificates
4. Approval of rabbis qualified to deal with Conversion and Gittin issues

5. Supporting rabbis with various difficulties within their communities
6. Legal advice regarding employment rights
7. Support and protection from external entities

D. MEMBERSHIP OBLIGATION

1. Under no circumstances should a CER member report on a fellow CER member by press or any type of media without prior consent in writing from the CER Standing Committee.
2. CER members are expected to support their fellow CER members facing difficulties.

E. CER STANDING COMMITTEE

1. GENERAL INFORMATION:

- 1.1 The CER Standing Committee is the supreme governing body of the CER. It meets semi annually in one of the major European cities or in Israel.
- 1.2 The CER Standing Committee consists of rabbis who are CER members and qualify for its prerequisite standards. They will have the commitment to work and adhere to the policies of the CER and participate in its meetings.
- 1.3 A CER Standing Committee member cannot be a member in any other European rabbinical organisation, without explicit written consent of the CER Standing Committee
- 1.4 All current CER Standing Committee memberships will be valid as long as the respective rabbinical positions as mentioned in clause E. 1.7 will be held.
- 1.5 Failure to attend three successive Standing Committee meetings will result in automatic termination of the membership. This excludes extenuating circumstances such as illness or war.
- 1.6 Addition of new members to the CER Standing Committee will be in accordance with the CER Protocol.
- 1.7 Membership in the CER Standing Committee is restricted to those holding rabbinical positions such as: rabbis of a country, city, community or a synagogue, or a Dayan in a well known and established Beth-Din. Following termination of employment, the rabbi is expected to hand in his resignation from the Standing Committee within six months. He may be reappointed to stay on as a member of the Standing Committee by a new process of election. Exceptions to the rule are: rabbis holding specific roles in the CER, those dedicating significant amount of time to the CER or those possessing unique expertise in the service of the CER.
- 1.8 The CER Standing Committee may comprise of:
 - i. CER President
 - ii. Rabbinical Director
 - iii. Head of the European Beth Din
 - iv. Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth
 - v. Senior Dayan in the London Beth Din



- vi. Senior Rabbi of the Spanish & Portuguese Sephardi Community of the UK
 - vii. Chief Rabbi of France
 - viii. Chief Rabbi of Paris or another major community in France
 - ix. Senior Dayan in France
 - x. Chief Rabbi of Strasbourg, representative in the Council of Europe
 - xi. Chief Rabbi of Rome
 - xii. Chief Rabbi of Brussels, representative in the European Union
 - xiii. Chief Rabbi and Head of Beth Din Amsterdam
 - xiv. Senior Rabbi of Ukraine
 - xv. Senior Rabbi of Switzerland
 - xvi. Chief Rabbi of Moscow /Russia
 - xvii. Senior Dayan in the Beth Din of Moscow
 - xviii. Member of Germany's Orthodox Rabbinical Board (ORD)
 - xix. President or Leader of the Hildesheimer Rabbinical Seminary in Berlin
 - xx. Senior Rabbi from South Europe (Spain, Portugal, Gibraltar)
 - xxi. Senior Rabbi from Austria
 - xxii. Chief Rabbi of Poland
 - xxiii. Senior Rabbi from the rest of Europe (i.e., Scandinavia, Luxembourg, Monaco)
 - xxiv. Senior Rabbi from the rest of Central Europe (i.e., Hungary, Czech Republic, Balkans, Turkey)
 - xxv. Senior Rabbi from the rest of the Post-Soviet states (i.e., Belarus, the Baltic states, Moldova, Georgia)
 - xxvi. Director of the Union of Mohalim Europe (UME)
 - xxvii. CER Representative in other Rabbinic Organisations
- ↪ The current CER Standing Committee is the exclusive body with the authority to appoint rabbis holding any of the aforementioned positions as CER Standing Committee members.
- ↪ Regarding positions 9-17 - the Chief Rabbi of the respective country, in conjunction with the rabbis present in the CER Convention, should submit their recommendations for suitable candidates for the Standing Committee. In the event of lack of consensus, the final decision will rest with the current Standing Committee.
- ↪ Regarding positions 15, 18, 20, 23, 24, 25 – recommendations for suitable candidates for the Standing Committee will be submitted by the rabbis of the respective regions present in the CER Convention.
- ↪ Five additional Standing Committee members will be chosen by the CER during a Convention. The total number of members on the Standing Committee will range between 30 and 40.
- 1.9 The standard protocol is to appoint Standing Committee members at the CER Convention; however the Standing Committee has the right to elect new members at any given point if necessary following consultation with rabbis of the respective states or regions.
- 1.10 In the event that the Standing Committee finds a certain individual unsuitable to continue as a CER member, it reserves the right to appoint a subcommittee to probe into the matter and evaluate whether the individual's CER membership should be discontinued.

- 1.11 For the sake of promoting and advancing the CER, and with consent of the CER President, the Standing Committee has the right to appoint five additional members external to the CER. The Standing Committee reserves the right to renege on this appointment and terminate it at their discretion.
- 1.12 The list of positions mentioned in clause 8 is subject to changes and adjustments by agreement of two thirds of the Standing Committee members.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE:

- 2.1 Appointment of a President
- 2.2 Appointment of Vice Presidents
- 2.3 Appointment of Presidium
- 2.4 Appointment of the Head of the European Beth Din
- 2.5 Appointment of a Chairman for the Standing Committee who will serve together with the CER President at Standing Committee meetings; this post is contingent upon the proposed Chairman committing to partial fundraising responsibility
- 2.6 Approval of new Standing Committee members
- 2.7 Approval of the executive management of the organisation
- 2.8 Approval of new CER members
- 2.9 Discuss CER issues and policies
- 2.10 Approval of the cabinet
- 2.11 Decide venue and date for Standing Committee meetings
- 2.12 Decide venue and date for CER meetings
- 2.13 Set European Rabbinate policy and standards
- 2.14 Manage and supervise the CER Fund registered in the UK

3. STANDING COMMITTEE ELECTIONS AND VOTING REGULATIONS:

- 3.1 Standing Committee members are obligated to partake in all Standing Committee meetings.
- 3.2 Standing Committee members unable to partake in any meetings must notify the rest of the members in writing.
- 3.3 Rabbinical courts represented in the Standing Committee, such as the London Beth Din, as well as other rabbinical organisations such as the ORD, have the option to send a substitute representative to the Standing Committee meetings, in lieu of the fixed member being unable to arrive.
- 3.4 Both Chief Rabbis of the UK and France have the right to send substitute representatives to Standing Committee meetings, excluding CER Conventions.
- 3.5 The CER President will announce the date and venue of the Standing Committee meetings at least 45 days prior to the event. Minimum participation in Standing Committee meetings is 60% of members. In certain cases

where in-person participation falls below this threshold, and voting for important matters cannot be delayed, the President reserve the right to conduct online voting.

- 3.6 Online voting requires over 60% participation. The three options for voting are: pro, anti and neutral. Standing Committee members are expected to partake in all elections. Failure to partake in voting is considered violation of the regulations. If this occurs three times, the President may deny this individual from exercising their right to vote.
- 3.7 The CER President will serve as the chair of the meetings. If the Standing Committee has its chairman, then the responsibility to chair the meetings will be jointly shared. The CER President has the right to appoint a chair for the meeting. In his absence, this right will be granted to the Standing Committee. This nomination has to be approved by the majority of the members of the Standing Committee.
- 3.8 The Standing Committee aims for consensus decisions. If there is no consensus, the chair reserves the right to remove the proposal from the agenda or take a vote.
- 3.9 All Committee decisions require a simple majority of meeting attendees. Any proposal to make changes to the CER Protocol requires the support of two thirds of committee members.
- 3.10 Candidates for the role of CER President are required to express their interest in the role to the Standing Committee. They will be required to confirm their commitment to spend the requisite time for the role and possess the necessary resources for the upcoming five years.
- 3.11 Elections for the role of CER President will take place without the presence of the candidates. All other votes will take the form of an open ballot with all present.
- 3.12 The official language of the CER and the Standing Committee is Hebrew.

F. CER PRESIDENT & PRESIDUM

The Standing Committee will appoint Presidium comprising of the President, the Head of the European Beth Din, Vice Presidents and CER former Presidents

The President

1. Elected for a 5-year term and can be re-elected to the role without any restrictions.
2. Has the duty to appoint the professional staff of the organisation.
3. Employs and manages the professional staff of the organisation.
4. Serves as the chair of the Standing Committee meetings.
5. Appoints a cabinet of 5-9 members within the Standing Committee.
6. Serves as the representative and spokesman of the CER.
7. Manages the day-to-day operation of the organisation as well as its budget
8. Signs documentation on behalf of the CER.
9. Authorised to form a Board of Patrons to fund the activity of the organisation; the Board of Patrons will be introduced to the Standing Committee by the President.

10. Authorised to form affiliated entities under the umbrella of the CER for the purpose of promoting the goals of the organisation, in consultation with the Standing Committee
11. Authorised to sign agreements on behalf of the CER with official bodies, such as governments, organisations and individuals.
12. Reserves the right to delegate roles to the Presidium members; these nominations require the approval of the Standing Committee.
13. In the event that the President is unable to continue in his role due to any reason such as resignation, political turmoil, illness or obituary, the Presidium will confirm this and appoint an Interim President within three months. Until then, the role of an Acting Interim President will be delegated to the oldest member within the Presidium.
14. If the Standing Committee believes that the President will be able to return to his role at a future time, the Standing Committee may extend the term of the Interim President up to a year. In a scenario that the President is still unable to return to his role, the Standing Committee will appoint a new President.

G. EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

1. The Standing Committee may be viewed as the 'Parliament' of the CER, and in a similar vein the Executive Council its 'Government'.
2. Significant decisions regarding policies, conventions or personal issues will be discussed between the President and the cabinet. Discussions can be held via phone or email.
3. The Executive Council will comprise of rabbis with the availability and full commitment to devote the requisite time and effort in CER activity, with priority to represent the various regions and communities across Europe.
4. The Executive Council will be appointed by the President and approved by the Standing Committee. With the consent of the Executive Council, the President reserves the right to request the resignation of an Executive Council member.
5. If the President wishes to add a new member to the Executive Council, the approval of the Standing Committee must be obtained.
6. The Executive Council will appoint two members as CER Trustees who will liaise with the accountants of the organisation.

H. EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT

1. The President is the Head of the Executive Management.
2. The President will employ professional staff to manage organisational operation. These appointments will be approved by the Standing Committee.
3. The Executive Management is responsible for the day-to-day running of the organisation. It comprises of three departments: Rabbinical, Administration and Political.
4. The Rabbinical department is responsible for the preservation of halachic standards and liaises with the Head of Beth-din.

5. The Administration department maintains contact with all CER members and provides them with necessary services, maintains contact with communities across Europe, organises meetings and conventions, responsible for finance, legal advice and manages official correspondence.
6. The Political department is responsible for the coordination of political representatives and functions, as well as maintaining contact with various formal European bodies.
7. The aforementioned departments can work jointly if necessary, however ideally they should operate as separate entities.
8. The Standing Committee has the right to add certain professionals to its ranks.

I. CER GENERAL CONVENTIONS

1. The CER General Convention is the biennial formal assembly of the organisation. Its date and venue are decided by vote taken by the Standing Committee.
2. All CER members will receive invitation to the General Convention. Invitations can take electronic format through logging into the CER official website. The Standing Committee maintains the right to invite various dignitaries who are non CER members to the CER General Convention.
3. The Standing Committee will appoint a subcommittee in order to plan and organise the Convention six months prior to the event. The subcommittee is responsible to designate topics, lecturers and guest speakers for the Convention.
4. During Conventions CER members can elect candidates for the Standing Committee in accordance with the CER Protocol. Following approval by the Standing Committee, candidates can serve for a 2-year term until the following Convention.
5. If a certain candidate is rejected by the Standing Committee, the place will be taken by the candidate who gained the most votes after him.
6. The Standing Committee will form a three-person panel to serve as an election committee.
7. Elections for various roles within the Standing Committee will be done by secret ballot.

J. EUROPEAN BETH DIN (EBD)

1. The European Beth Din is the supreme Halachic authority of the CER
2. In the event of a dispute regarding any matter pertaining to the CER Protocol or constitutional lack of clarity, the matter will be referred to the sole and exclusive authority of the EBD.
3. In the event of a dispute regarding financial matters between the CER and its employees, the matter will be referred to the sole and exclusive authority of the EBD.
4. The Head of the EBD will automatically serve as a member of the Presidium as well as the Standing Committee
5. The EBD will employ experienced Dayanim from established European Batei Din. Dayanim will be elected by the majority of the Executive Council. Their duties include electing the Secretary of the Beth Din as well as the venue and date of their meetings.



6. A new Head of the EBD can be elected by two thirds of the Executive Council members, followed by the support of two thirds of the Standing Committee members.
7. The Head of the EBD will serve in his role for the duration of his life, or until he resigns. Alternatively, the Presidium may terminate his service due to illness or political turmoil. The Presidium will then instruct the Executive Council to appoint an Interim Head within three months, or may instruct the temporary delegation of his duties to the members of the EBD.
8. If the Standing Committee believes that the Head of the EBD will be able to return to his role at a future time, the Standing Committee can then extend the term of the Interim Head up to a year. In the event that the Head of the EBD is still unable to return to his role, the Standing Committee will appoint a new Head of Beth Din.

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רבני אירופה
CER