

## **The Supreme Council of Defence**

The Supreme Council of Defence is a body set forth by the Constitution to analyse general and technical political issues relative to national security and defence.

Established under Art. 87 of the Constitutional Charter, it was instituted by Law N. 624 of 28 July 1950 (the law was abrogated and later incorporated, without amendments, in the Code of Military Ordinances – Legislative Decree N. 66 of 15 March 2010), and its organisational and functional setup was subsequently regulated by specific legal provisions.

The Council is chaired by the President of the Republic and is composed of the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Ministers of the Interior, of Economy and Finance, of Defence and of Economic Development, and the Chief of the Defence Staff.

According to general practice, the Council meetings are also attended by the Cabinet Undersecretary of State, the Secretary-General of the President of the Republic and the Secretary of the Supreme Council of Defence.

Depending on the circumstance and on the issues dealt with, invited to the meetings are also other ministers, the Chief of Staff of the Army, the Commanding General of the Carabinieri, the President of the Consiglio di Stato (the advisory body to the cabinet), in addition to other officials and personalities holding special qualifications in the field of science, industry and economics, as well as experts in military problems.

### **The functions**

The Supreme Council of Defence is the principal instrument through which the President of the Republic acquires detailed information on the Government's orientations in security and defence matters, so as to be able to adequately perform the complex balancing and guarantor function to which he is designated by the Constitution.

More in general, the Council constitutes the permanent institutional seat in which to hold a multidisciplinary debate and analysis of the problems related to security and defence.

The activities conducted by the Council and its ensuing actions concur to enable its members to perform, in synergy on agreed actions, their respective institutional roles in the exercise of their specific competences and in support of those of each one of the other members.

In other terms, the Supreme Council of Defence is an instrument of dialogue and preliminary debate among the people in charge of the political orientation in national security matters: through it the members can concur to define the criteria on the basis of which to better exercise their respective tasks.

### **Organisational setup**

The President of the Republic is vested with the task of convening the Council, drafting the agenda and chairing the meetings.

Pursuant to the provisions laid down in the aforesaid Legislative Decree N. 66 of 2010, the President of the Republic convenes the Supreme Council of Defence at least twice a year, with an agenda also taking into consideration the indications given by the Council or by the Prime Minister.

Notice of the Council meeting and of the relative agenda is given through an ad hoc press release by the office of the President of the Republic. The outcome of the Council meeting is contained in the minutes of the meeting, which are reserved for its members, and can also include the documents examined.

The main elements characterising the Council's decisions are summarised in a final press release disseminated by the office of the President of the Republic at the conclusion of each meeting.

The Secretary of the Supreme Council of Defence is in charge of preparing the meeting, networking with the different Ministries involved in the meeting, drafting the minutes of the meeting and implementing the deliberations. The Secretary of the Supreme Council of Defence is appointed by the same Council, at the proposal of the President of the Republic, in agreement with the Prime Minister. In the performance of his duties, he relies on the Secretariat of the Supreme Council of Defence, which forms part the General Secretariat of the President of the Italian Republic.

### **The main laws concerning the Council**

The regulatory framework directly or indirectly concerning the Supreme Council of Defence includes, in addition to the aforesaid Art. 87 of the Constitution, the following legal provisions:

- Legislative Decree N. 303 of 30 July 1999, concerning the organisation of the Cabinet, pursuant to Art. 11 of Law N. 59 of 15 March 1997;
- The Protocol of Understanding dated 26 July 2000 between the Secretary-General of the President of the Republic and the Cabinet Secretary General;
- Legislative Decree N. 66 of 15 March 2010 – Code of Military Ordinances;
- Decree of the President of the Italian Republic N. 90 of 15 March 2010 – Consolidated Law on the regulatory provisions of military ordinances, pursuant to Art. 14 of Law N. 246 of 28 November 2005;
- Internal organisation decrees by the office of the President of the Republic.