



## Inter-State Council

**For Prelims:** Inter-State Council, Sarkaria Commission, Article 263

**For Mains:** Inter-State Council and issues, Centre-State Relations, Inter-State Relations

### Why in News?

Recently, the [Inter-State Council \(ISC\)](#) has been reconstituted with the Prime Minister as Chairman and Chief Ministers of all States and six Union Ministers as members.

- **Ten** union ministers will be the permanent invitees to the Inter-State Council.
- The government has also reconstituted the [standing committee of the Inter-State Council](#) with Union Home as Chairman.
  - The Chief Ministers of **Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh** are also members of the standing committee of the Inter-State Council.

### What is the Inter-State Council?

- **Background:**
  - As part of the **process of reviewing the working of the existing arrangements** between the Union and the States, the Government constituted a commission in 1988 under the Chairmanship of Justice R.S. Sarkaria.
  - One of the **important recommendations of Sarkaria Commission** was for establishing a permanent **Inter-State Council** as an independent national forum for consultation with a mandate well defined in accordance with **Article 263 of the Constitution of India**.
- **About:**
  - The inter-state council is a **recommendatory body** that has been empowered to **investigate and discuss subjects of common interest** between the Union and state(s), or among states.
  - It also **makes recommendations for better coordination of policy** and action on these subjects, and deliberations on matters of general interest to the states, which may be referred to it by its chairman.
  - It also **deliberates on other matters of general interest** to the states as may be referred by the chairman to the council.
  - The Council may **meet at least thrice in a year**.
  - There is also a **Standing Committee of the Council**.
- **Composition:**
  - Prime Minister Chairman
  - Chief Ministers of all States Members
  - Chief Ministers of Union Territories having a Legislative Assembly and Administrators of UTs not having a Legislative Assembly and Governors of States under President's Rule (Governor's Rule in the case of J&K) Members.
  - Six Ministers of Cabinet rank in the Union Council of Ministers to be nominated by the Prime

## What are the Functions of the Inter-State Council?

- To **create a strong institutional framework** to promote and support [cooperative federalism](#) in the country and activate the council and zonal councils by organising regular meetings.
- Facilitates consideration of all pending and emerging issues of Centre-state and inter-state relations by the zonal councils and inter-state council.
- **Develops a sound system to monitor the implementation of recommendations** put forward by them.

## What is the Standing Committee of ISC?

- **About:**
  - It was set up in **1996 for continuous consultation** and processing of matters for the consideration of the Council.
  - It consists of the following members: (i) Union Home Minister as the Chairman (ii) Five Union Cabinet Ministers (iii) Nine Chief Ministers the Council is assisted by a secretariat called the Inter-State Council Secretariat.
  - This **secretariat was set-up in 1991** and is headed by a secretary to the Government of India. Since 2011, it is also functioning as the secretariat of the Zonal Councils.
- **Functions:**
  - The standing committee will **have continuous consultation and process matters for consideration of the council**, process all matters pertaining to centre-state relations before they are taken up for consideration in the inter-state council.
  - The standing committee also **monitors the implementation of the decisions taken on the recommendations of the council** and consider any other matter referred to it by the chairman or the council.

## Which other Bodies Promote Interstate Relation?

- [Zonal Council:](#)
  - The Zonal Councils are the **statutory (and not the constitutional) bodies**. They are established by an Act of the Parliament, that is, States Reorganisation Act of 1956.
  - The **act divided the country into five zones-** Northern, Central, Eastern, Western and Southern and provided a zonal council for each zone.
    - While forming these zones, several factors have been taken into account which include: the natural divisions of the country, the river systems and means of communication, the cultural and linguistic affinity and the requirements of economic development, security and law and order.
  - **North Eastern Council:** The North Eastern States i.e. (i) Assam (ii) Arunachal Pradesh (iii) Manipur (iv) Tripura (v) Mizoram (vi) Meghalaya and (vii) Nagaland are not included in the Zonal Councils and their special problems are looked after by the **North Eastern Council**, set up under the North Eastern Council Act, 1972.
- **Inter-State Trade and Commerce:**
  - **Articles 301 to 307 in Part XIII of the Constitution** deal with the trade, commerce and intercourse within the territory of India.
- **Inter-State Water Disputes:**
  - **Article 262 of the Constitution** provides for the adjudication of interstate water disputes.
  - It makes two provisions:
    - Parliament may by law provide for the adjudication of any dispute or complaint with respect to the use, distribution and control of waters of any inter-state river and river valley.
    - Parliament may also provide that neither the Supreme Court nor any other court is to exercise jurisdiction in respect of any such dispute or complaint.

## Way Forward

- If the Inter-State Council is to emerge as the key institution to manage inter-state frictions, it **first needs to have a regular meeting schedule.**
- There is an **institutional gap in the Indian union right now**—and it needs to be filled before inter-state frictions get out of control.
- The council also has to have a **permanent secretariat which will ensure that the periodic meetings are more fruitful.**

**[Source: TH](#)**

PDF Refernece URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/printpdf/inter-state-council>