



Strasbourg, 1 December 2015

CDDECS-BU (2015) RAP 2

**EUROPEAN COMMITTEE FOR SOCIAL COHESION,
HUMAN DIGNITY AND EQUALITY
(CDDECS)**

**BUREAU
4th MEETING**

22 and 23 October 2015

**Council of Europe, Paris Office
55 Avenue Kléber, Paris**

REPORT

1. OPENING OF THE MEETING AND ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT ANNOTATED AGENDA

The Bureau of the European Committee for Social Cohesion, Human Dignity and Equality (CDDECS) held its 4th meeting from 22 to 23 October 2015 in Paris. The list of participants is in Appendix 1. The agenda was adopted as set out in Appendix 2.

2. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE 3rd MEETING OF THE BUREAU

The Bureau adopted the 3rd meeting report as proposed.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CDDECS WORK PROGRAMME AND RESULTS OF THE AD HOC WORKING GROUPS' WORK

Working group A – Roundtable discussion on “Social inclusion of all persons and in particular of all persons in vulnerable situations and effectiveness of rights”

The Chair informed the Bureau that the Secretariat is preparing a publication, as a follow up to the Roundtable on social inclusion of all persons organised at the 3rd CDDECS meeting (27-29 May 2015), which will be available in December 2015.

Working group B – Review of the Social Cohesion Strategy and Action Plan

The Chair recalled that the Bureau was instructed by CDDECS to discuss the draft concept paper: *The Way Ahead on the future work on social cohesion*, prepared by the Ad hoc working group in view of its possible adoption at its next meeting on 9-11 December 2015.

The working group had different exchanges about a possible text since the last CDDECS meeting. However, in absence of consensus within the working group, it had not yet provided a draft concept paper.

The Bureau expressed concerns about the future of the CDDECS and underlined the necessity to keep social cohesion at the Council of Europe's agenda if the mandate of CDDECS is not reconducted in 2016 - 2017.

Due to the fact that the meeting of the Ministers' Deputies competent rapporteur Group (GR-SOC) is planned on 28 October 2015, the Bureau considered it necessary to issue a statement during its current meeting in order to give CDDECS' view to the Committee of Ministers before the approval of the programme of activities and budget 2016 - 2017 on 24-26 November 2015.

The Bureau agreed on the draft statement as proposed in Appendix 3 and it instructed the secretariat to send this draft statement for “yes” or “No” to CDDECS immediately with a short deadline (26 October 2015).

Since it is to be a CDDECS statement and the Bureau cannot decide on it for the whole Committee, the Bureau decided that unanimous agreement by all members is needed before it can be sent to the Chair of GR-SOC¹.

¹ The draft statement was sent to CDDECS members on Friday 23 October 2015 but in the absence of unanimous agreement it was not submitted to the GR-SOC as a CDDECS document.

Working group D - Hearing on social inclusion of all persons, and in particular of all persons in vulnerable situations

and

Working group E - Roundtable discussion on the role of equality bodies, national human rights institutions, and ombudsmen in promoting equality

The Chair recalled that, at its last meeting, the CDDECS decided to organise jointly the Hearing on social inclusion and the Roundtable on the role of equality bodies at its 4th meeting (9-11 December 2015).

The secretariat informed the Bureau of the decision to co-organize with the Finnish Human Rights Centre a conference on the same item than the working groups D and E end of 2015, according to the received Centre's proposal.

Having being consulted about the possibility to organize the next CDDECS meeting in Helsinki, the Chair and Vice-Chair considered that organizing jointly the CDDECS Roundtable and the Finnish conference is an opportunity to give more visibility to CDDECS work and to synergy between international and national partners. Consequently, it was decided that the 4th CDDECS meeting will take place in Helsinki, Finland.

Nevertheless, some Bureau members expressed dissatisfaction to such decision as it was taken without consultation, neither within all Bureau members nor in the CDDECS.

The program of the Roundtable/Conference is based on the two concept notes (see doc. CDDECS (2015) 3, pages 24 to 32) prepared by the Working groups D and E and in close cooperation with them. Speakers and examples of good practices have already been submitted by the Working groups to the Secretariat. Additional input from the Bureau is welcomed.

4. REPORT OF THE 55TH MEETING OF THE EUROPEAN STEERING COMMITTEE FOR YOUTH (CDEJ) - 12-14 OCTOBER 2015, STRASBOURG

The Vice-chair, Mr Alexis Rinckenbach (France), who participated at the Youth Committee, made an oral report.

5. WORK OF THE THREE CDDECS SUBORDINATE BODIES

➤ Gender Equality Commission (DECS-GEC)

The Bureau took note of the recent activities organised by the Gender Equality Commission, in particular the Conference of "Towards Guaranteeing Equal Access of Women to Justice (Bern, 15-16 October 2015). The Vice-chair, Mr Alexis Rinckenbach (France), who participated at this event, made an oral report.

➤ Committee of Experts on the rights of people with disabilities (DECS-RPD)

The Bureau took note of the activities planned by the DECS-RPD, in particular the organisation of the *Council of Europe [Conference](#) "Promoting Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Ambitions, Impact and Challenges Ahead" organised in cooperation with the Department of Justice and Equality of Ireland, Dublin, Ireland on 5-6 November 2015"* . The CDDECS will be represented by its Bulgarian member who is also member of the DECS-RPD.

➤ **Committee of Experts on the Council of Europe strategy for the rights of the child 2016-2019 (DECS-ENF)**

The Secretariat presents the Draft of the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child for the period 2016-2021. It recalled that the draft Strategy has been elaborated over the past 12 months with 35 member States which took part in the preparatory works. This text, which started with a broad consultation of member States, NGOs and ombudspersons for children, continued over three meetings of the DECS-ENF in November 2014, May 2015 and October 2015.

The Bureau examined the text and provided comments, which will be taken into account in the revised draft before sending it to the CDDECS. The Bureau decided to send for comments this document to all members with deadline of 27 November 2015.

The CDDECS is invited to approve the Strategy and submit it to the Committee of Ministers for adoption in early 2016 at its December meeting

6. PREPARATION OF THE 4th CDDECS MEETING (Helsinki, Finland, 9-11/12/2015)

Having examined the draft agenda prepared by the Secretariat, the Bureau asked for clarification about the order of business which combines CDDECS meeting and CDDECS Roundtable/Conference. Some concerns were expressed about the fact that two days will be devoted to the Roundtable/Conference on equality bodies and only one day for CDDECS' usual business.

The Bureau decided to invite a High level representative of the Department to inform the CDDECS about the decisions taken by the Committee of Ministers concerning the future of social cohesion issues as well as the Chairs (or if not possible, the Vice-Chairs) of the subordinate bodies about their results .

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

8. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETINGS

The 4th CDDECS plenary meeting will take place on **9-11 December 2015** in Helsinki (Finland).

APPENDIX 1

Members of the Bureau 2014-2015	
Ms Carlien SCHEELE (The Netherlands / Pays-Bas), Chair	
Mr Alexis RINCKENBACH (France), Vice Chair	
Ms Merita XHAFAJ (Albania / Albanie)	abs
Ms Nadezhda HARIZANOVA (Bulgaria / Bulgarie)	abs
Ms Marja-Liisa PARJANNE (Finland / Finlande)	
Ms Rita SKREBIŠKIENE (Lithuania / Lituanie)	
Mr Silvan AGIUS (Malta / Malte)	abs
Mr Jerzy CIECHANSKI (Poland / Pologne)	
Ms Maria ORESHINA (Russian Federation / Fédération de Russie)	

DRAFT AGENDA

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2. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE 3rd MEETING OF THE BUREAU
3. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CDDECS WORK PROGRAMME AND RESULTS OF THE AD HOC WORKING GROUPS' WORK
4. 55TH MEETING OF THE EUROPEAN STEERING COMMITTEE FOR YOUTH (CDEJ) - 12-14 OCTOBER 2015, STRASBOURG
5. WORK OF THE THREE CDDECS SUBORDINATE BODIES
 - Gender Equality Commission ([DECS-GEC](#))
 - Committee of Experts on the rights of people with disabilities ([DECS-RPD](#))
 - Committee of Experts on the Council of Europe strategy for the rights of the child 2016-2019 ([DECS-ENF](#))
6. PREPARATION OF THE 4th CDDECS meeting (Helsinki, Finland, 9-11 December 2015)
7. OTHER BUSINESS

STATEMENT
OF THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE FOR SOCIAL COHESION, HUMAN DIGNITY AND EQUALITY (CDDECS)
ON THE NEED TO MAINTAIN THE COMMITMENT OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE TO SOCIAL COHESION

Social cohesion in Europe is currently in greater danger than ever. Growing economic and social disparities have been compounded with new challenges, such as political radicalization of sizeable segments of European societies and the current influx of refugees from war-torn regions.

Human rights, including the social rights and requisite standards, are the bedrock of the European Social Model. Yet, those rights will not be fully enjoyed by Europeans, without integrated support of well-crafted social policies. Social cohesion in Europe depends on the commitment to rights and investment in social policies giving effect to them.

The Council of Europe has developed the concept of social cohesion, and put in place a Strategy for Social Cohesion which goes well beyond combatting poverty and social exclusion. For years the Council of Europe has been the center of European policy development and debate on this critical issue. That was possible because the Council of Ministers has maintained its firm institutional commitment to social cohesion, first by setting up the European Committee for Social Cohesion (CDCS), and since 2014, by making social cohesion an important task of the European Committee for Social Cohesion, Human Dignity and Equality (CDDECS).

The CDDECS welcomes the mainstreaming of social cohesion in all relevant areas of the Council of Europe's work on the basis of the Action Plan on Building Inclusive Societies. However, the Committee strongly believes that the institutional commitment of the Council of Europe to social cohesion should be maintained at the intergovernmental level.