

Delegates from more than twenty-five member States decide on content and format of updated Council of Europe recommendation on e-voting

Last 28-29 October, around fifty participants representing more than twenty-five member States, international organisations and academia gathered in Strasbourg to discuss the update of Council of Europe Recommendation on e-voting.

As a result of the discussions during the plenary meeting of the Ad hoc Committee of Experts on Legal, Operational and Technical Standards for e-voting (CAHVE), delegates agreed on extending the definition of e-voting in order to include all kind of optical scanners in the scope of the Recommendation; on the importance to remind that the conduct of e-enabled elections and referendums poses special responsibilities for Electoral Management Bodies; and on raising awareness on the challenges accompanying the introduction of e-voting.

Participants also agreed on adopting a new structure for the Recommendation, identifying core standards applicable to all forms of e-voting accompanied by specific requirements for each e-voting method. Delegates also insisted on the need to formalise a review mechanisms to assess the implementation of the Recommendations and follow-up on e-voting-related developments in member States.

To the date, Council of Europe Recommendation Rec(2004)11 to member States on legal, operational and technical standards for e-voting remains the only international standard on the subject. The Recommendation is even used in national legislation of non-member States and referred by to different international organisations worldwide.

However, during the biennial review meetings under Rec(2004)11 national delegates had raised the need to update the Recommendation in view of social and technological developments. With this in mind, the Committee of Ministers decided to set up the CAHVE.

The second phase of the update is now due to start. During this phase the different provisions included in the current Recommendation will be reviewed. A draft updated Recommendation is then expected to be finalised during the first half of 2016.