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Activities of other Council of Europe bodies – Addendum

CDDG rapporteurs

For action

Secretariat Memorandum
prepared by the
Directorate General of Democracy
Democratic Governance Department

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Introduction

In accordance with its terms of reference 2016-2017 as well as its task to “oversee the Council of Europe’s intergovernmental work in the field of democracy”, taking due account of relevant transversal perspectives, the CDDG appointed:

- Two rapporteurs on Gender Equality;
- Rapporteur on Children’s Rights.

Furthermore, Article 14 of Appendix 1 to Committee of Ministers’ Resolution CM/Res(2011)24 on “Intergovernmental committees and subordinate bodies, their terms of reference and working methods” states:

- “a. Committees may appoint a rapporteur, a drafting committee or both.
- b. Where necessary, in order to expedite the progress of their work, committees may entrust a rapporteur or a limited number of committee members with a specific task to be fulfilled by their next meeting, using primarily information technologies.”

Rapporteurs may be called upon for a variety of tasks. This may include the attendance of meetings, contributions to specific activities in their field, presenting the activities of the CDDG or reporting on the relevance or impact of standard-setting documents or activities for the work of the CDDG. Rapporteurs, in cooperation with the Bureau and the Secretariat, are also requested to propose elements for possible inclusion in action to be taken under the Committee’s terms of reference.

The CDDG, since 2014, also appointed rapporteurs in the following fields:

- Modernisation of public administration and services;
- Transfrontier cooperation;
- E-democracy and e-governance; as well as a representative to
- The European Social Cohesion Platform (PECS).

Additional nominations

In addition, the CDDG had appointed three representatives to the *Ad hoc Committee of Experts on Legal, Operational and Technical Standards for e-voting* (CAHVE) - 16-17 April 2015).

In relation to possible action in the field of public ethics, the Committee, following its thematic exchange on this topic on 11-12 May 2017, further called for expressions of interest in the role of rapporteur “to accompany the Secretariat in the implementation of the actions decided”.

A succinct overview of the rapporteurs and representatives appointed to date as well as specific tasks formulated by the CDDG previously, is set out in Appendix.

Action required

The CDDG is invited to take note of the information provided and in the light of its terms of reference for 2018-2019 to:

- Renew the mandate of the rapporteurs on gender equality and on children's rights or to replace any outgoing rapporteur(s);
- Examine the role of other rapporteurs appointed to date and decide on the possible renewal of their appointment;
- Appoint any new rapporteurs and/or representatives as appropriate, taking into account the transversal perspectives of the work of the CDDG and the activities of other Council of Europe bodies (see document CDDG(2017)26);
- Request the rapporteurs to contribute to reports on the impact of the CDDG activities in member States by way of succinct reports on their activities;
- Invite delegations to keep all rapporteurs, and in particular on Gender Equality and on Children's Rights, informed on relevant initiatives and recent developments in their respective countries.

APPENDIX

Overview of CDDG rapporteurs and representatives appointed in the past

Gender Equality

In 2012, the Transversal Programme on Gender Equality was launched to improve the visibility and impact of the Council of Europe's work on gender equality in member states; to move from legal equality to real equality, as member states were called upon to do by the Committee of Ministers in its Declaration, « [Making Gender Equality a Reality](#) »¹.

Two Gender equality rapporteurs were appointed (3-4 April 2014). Due to changes in the function of one of the rapporteurs and her successors, currently only one rapporteur, Mr Edwin Lefebvre (Belgium), has been in a position to continue this work. A succinct report by rapporteur is presented in document CDDG(2017)24.

Children's Rights

On 15 February 2012, the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child 2012-2015 was adopted. In 2016, the Council of Europe [Strategy for the Rights of the Child \(2016-2021\)](#) was adopted.

The CDDG rapporteur for Children's Rights *"liaise[s] with the stakeholders' network of the Strategy and report back to and raise awareness within the CDDG on issues related to child protection*. Ms Laurence Gindt has been the rapporteur since her appointment on 3-4 April 2014.

A short overview by the rapporteur in relation to Children's Rights and the work of the CDDG, in particular in relation to the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021), is presented for consideration and possible action in Appendix 1.

European Social Cohesion Platform (PECS)

For the period 2016-2017, in the social field, a transversal and cross-sectoral approach is applied. "Social cohesion should be mainstreamed into all relevant policy processes and into the functioning of the various bodies and institutions of the Council of Europe." and the Council of Europe Social Cohesion Strategy (2010) "remains a reference for the organisation's work". In the intergovernmental sector therefore, all relevant steering and ad hoc committees, including the CDDG, were instructed to contribute to the building of cohesive societies.

Having been invited to appoint a representative in the newly created European Platform for Social Cohesion, the CDDG, at its meeting on 19-20 May 2016, nominated Mr Edwin Lefebvre (Belgium). A contribution by the rapporteur is presented in Appendix 2.

¹ 119th Session of the Committee of Ministers, Madrid 12 May 2009. The declaration was circulated to committees in accordance with the decision of the Committee of Ministers taken at the 1057th meeting of their Deputies.

Modernisation of public administration and services

The task of the rapporteur includes liaising with the Secretariat and member States in relation to identifying initiatives and personalities that could stimulate the exchanges of view and work of the CDDG. This may include reporting on conferences, seminars, or other events that contribute to the identification of best practices and innovative experiences.

In December 2014 the Committee appointed a rapporteur for modernisation of public administration and services. The rapporteur currently is Mr Mihai Adrian Groșan (Romania) who was appointed in April 2015.

Transfrontier cooperation

In the context of its exchanges on this topic, the CDDG, on 4-5 December 2014, decided to appoint Mr Edwin Lefebre as rapporteur for transfrontier cooperation.

It requested the rapporteur *"to follow its activities in this area and report back to the Bureau and the plenary as appropriate, to raise, as the case might be, the awareness of the Committee on important developments concerning transfrontier cooperation across Europe and act as a coordinator of EDEN should the need arise."*

Specific CDDG tools on transfrontier cooperation include the EDEN-database with recent improvements and updates as presented (see also item 4.4 of the agenda – document CDDG(2017)20) and the Cross-Border Cooperation toolkit of the Centre of Expertise

E-Democracy and e-Governance

The CDDG appointed rapporteurs on e-governance and e-democracy to present their findings in relation to the two thematic workshops organised by the Committee in 2015. They also outlined *"...elements for the attention of all member States and for consideration, as the case may be, by the Committee of Ministers."*

E-voting

The CDDG representatives (appointed in April 2015) on the *Ad-hoc Committee of Experts on Legal, Operational and Technical Standards for e-voting* (CAHVE) contributed to the work of the CAHVE, through questionnaires and the attendance at meetings on the preparation of the new Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)5 on standards for e-voting. The CAHVE has now completed its work.

European Local Democracy Week

Following the joint initiative in 2007 by the European Committee on Local and Regional Democracy (CDLR) and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, Mr Paul-Henri Philips has followed this event on behalf of the Committee.

Appendix 1

Links between the Ad-hoc Committee for the Rights of the Child (CAHENF) and the CDDG

Far from being a mere cliché, « Investing » in our children is the key to a sustainable society; the well-being and education of children should constitute a priority. The protection of childhood, and associated concerns, are universal questions and arise in all corners of the world, in situations of crises but also during periods of stability.

In 2016, the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021) was adopted. The five priority objectives of the Strategy are:

- equal opportunities for all children;
- participation of all children;
- a life free from violence for all children;
- child-friendly justice for all children;
- rights of the child in the digital environment.

In terms of priorities linked with the issues examined by the CDDG, we can essentially identify the priorities linked to the participation of children and the digital environment.

The Strategy, for the first time, recognises the rights of the child in the digital environment as a priority, underlining that the three P's - participation, protection and provision of services - should be guaranteed in a non-discriminatory manner while taking into account the overarching interest of the child.

Under the Strategy, member states are presented with a range of advice and supports, in order to ensure the right of children to participation, to protection and to the provision of services in the digital world.

The digital world and the issues it entails certainly presents on of the new concerns which all children face. Children and young people make use of the new technologies, the Internet and social media, as a natural extension of their daily lives and it is our responsibility to see to it that they are safe. However, the digital world is not just a dangerous precipice, and it should not be reduced to nor confused with the concern for protection, it offers also infinite possibilities for the development, education and social involvement of children and young people everywhere. Thanks to the digital world both opportunities and challenges open up which constitutes a new phenomenon.

And whilst the younger generations may intuitively use the numerous electronic tools that surround us, young people nevertheless and as much as ever before still need to learn 'how to learn'. The idea of "digital natives" is only a myth and growing up in a digital environment does not automatically imply mastering or understanding it as 'digital natives, as everyone, learn in a cognitive way.

From the perspective of the Ad hoc Committee on the Rights of the Child (CAHENF), it is essential to listen to children as they are best placed to tell us: what they are faced with; the challenges that need to be dealt with; and elements for which courses of action or policy should be elaborated. Examining the digital world from a children's point of view is an effective way for finding appropriate solutions for children that they themselves can understand and accept.

Scope for action:

Possible action by the CDDG in its activities could take into account the following:

1. Digital access and proficiency in its use are a means for integration and inclusion in today's society.

Certain activities of the CDDG concern the use of digital tools for improved implementation and simplification of democratic participation for all. This work of our committee has only just started and, aware of the importance of the stakes in connection with digitalisation, we even considered setting up an ad-hoc group. We could envisage different types of studies or different ways to examine the issues to approach this theme, taking into account the children's/youth perspective, a specific audience that is part of the category of vulnerable groups. The guidelines we elaborated thus apply to and consider the children's and youth perspective.

Different themes could be studied such as, for example, how to :

1. bridge the digital divide?;
2. anticipate the disappearance of numerous jobs due to the creation of robots and due to the development of the artificial intelligences (→by promoting learning skills, from an early age, such as code and programming.); or whether
3. identify appropriate paths for establishing "conversational democracy" in social medias especially for children and young people since the internet has liberated speech in a prodigious way in a short period of time; How to target the ethics of (democratic) debate ? (e.g. through a web platform, a charter of good practices, by updating existing tools ? etc.).

2. Should we consider widening our field of activities to ensure more specifically effective participation of children?

Attention should be drawn in our work to the participation of children in decision making in local and regional bodies. In cooperation with the Ad hoc Committee for the Rights of the Child, we could, in particular, support the introduction of electronic platforms for participation at the local and regional level. Different types of cooperation could be the subject of discussion within the committee.

Laurence GINDT

CDDG Rapporteur on the Rights of the Child

Appendix 2

Report by the CDDG representative to the European Social Cohesion Platform (PECS)

Report prepared with Mr Edwin Lefebvre, CDDG Rapporteur on Gender Equality

The CDDG, in its task of overseeing “the Council of Europe’s intergovernmental work in the field of democratic governance at all levels, to promote the goal of democratic security” is asked to do so “while taking due account of a gender perspective and to building cohesive societies”. The work of the European Social Cohesion Platform is therefore also of interest to us.

As CDDG representative, I had the opportunity to present the activities of the CDDG to the Platform and to elaborate on the synergy between the activities of the Platform activities and the work of the CDDG (on 19 September 2017).

One of the activities of the CDDG is the active promotion of the implementation of the Twelve Principles of Good Democratic Governance. This also includes Principle 11: Human Rights, Cultural Diversity and Social Cohesion. The Principle, which seeks to ensure respect and implementation of human rights and to further cultural diversity, also promotes social cohesion, the integration of disadvantaged areas and preservation of access to essential services, in particular for the most disadvantaged sections of the population.

The third pillar, out of four, of the Strategy for social cohesion of the Council of Europe, “strengthening representation and democratic decision making and expanding social dialogue and civic engagement” very much corresponds with the objectives and activities of the CDDG in this area.

Activities of the CDDG under its current terms of reference that concern this third pillar and which are also of interest to the Platform, included:

- The new guidelines to ensure meaningful civil participation in political decision-making

The purpose of these guidelines is to strengthen and facilitate participation by individuals, NGOs and civil society at large in political decision making. Approved by the Committee of Ministers on 27 September 2017, they should constitute a significant contribution to the effective implementation of the abovementioned third pillar.

- The revision of the Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers (2001)¹⁹ on the participation of citizens in local public life

The role and functions of local authorities and local democracy develop and evolve continuously in all European countries: solutions deemed appropriate in 2001, or today for that matter, must be constantly checked and if necessary challenged in the light of changes in society and in citizens' needs and expectations. These changes also concern the role and responsibilities of local authorities in relation to social cohesion.

The CDDG thus decided to bring the Recommendation up to date to date to reflect current concerns and recent developments in member States in respect of citizen participation, if adopted by the Committee of Ministers, should also contribute to "strengthening representation and democratic decision making and expanding social dialogue and civic engagement".

The CDDG may further wish to consider that in addition to Principle 11 mentioned above, various other principles provide synergies to strengthen social cohesion. These would include *Responsiveness* (Principle 2) which aims to ensure that legitimate expectations and needs of citizens are met and public services delivered, *Efficiency and Effectiveness* (Principle 3) in terms of service provision and making the best possible use of resources available, as well as *Ethical Conduct* (Principle 6) in that the public good is placed before individual interests.

The above illustrates various transversal aspects of the Committee's work which seeks to strengthen principles of democracy for all. The CDDG may therefore wish to continue following up to the work of the Platform in order to ensure that due consideration is given to all aspects of social cohesion in its work and in the dialogue with member States.