



Strasbourg, 25 April 2017

CDDG-Bu(2017)11

BUREAU OF THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE  
ON DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE  
(CDDG)

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MEETING REPORT<sup>1</sup>

31 March 2017, Council of Europe, Paris

1. Opening of the meeting

The Chair, Mr Paul Rowsell, opened the meeting and welcomed the participants, in particular Mr Damien Feraille (France) for whom it was the first Bureau meeting.

Ms Greta Ulland-Billing (Norway) had apologised for absence while Ms Inga Nyholm had resigned from the Bureau due to a change in her professional duties (See also Item 8, "Election of two members of the Bureau"). The list of participants is set out in Appendix I.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda as adopted is set out in Appendix II.

3. Decisions of the Committee of Ministers of relevance to the work of the CDDG

The Bureau took note of the adoption of the abridged report of the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of the CDDG on November 2016 (CM(2017)18 by the Committee of Ministers as well as the latter's reply to Congress Recommendation 392 (2016) on "Good governance in metropolitan areas".

The Secretariat was instructed to give due consideration to the Committee of Ministers' reply in preparing the proposed conference on metropolitan areas (See also item 7.3).

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<sup>1</sup> Prepared by the Secretariat and approved by the Chair.

#### 4. State of implementation of the CDDG's activities according to its terms of reference

##### 4.1 *CDDG programme of activities*

The Chair emphasised the need to complete the tasks the CDDG had been given by the Committee of Ministers successfully under the current terms of reference, in particular as regards the guidelines for civil participation in political decision-making and the revision of CM/Rec(2001)19 on citizen participation in local public life.

The Bureau was informed of the Conference under the Chairmanship of the Czech Republic, foreseen on 20-21 September 2017, on the topic of quality of public administration at local and regional level and strongly supported the event. The Secretariat should provide the CDDG with all relevant information at its May meeting, clearly outlining the target audience, type of high-level participation and substantive input expected.

##### 4.2 *Civil participation in political decision-making*

The Bureau underlined that the guidelines should create a positive and constructive working environment for civil participation, bringing together the various actors in member states and strengthen democratic decision-making.

It examined the draft guidelines as revised following the drafting group meeting on 3 February 2017 (document CDDG-Bu(2017)3), and the written comments. It debated remaining issues and instructed the Secretariat to prepare consolidated draft guidelines for the CDDG meeting on 11-12 May, incorporating specific comments from drafting group members and clearly outlining issues that would require a final decision by the CDDG.

##### 4.3 *Revision of Committee of Ministers' Recommendation CM/Rec(2001)19 on citizen participation in local public life*

Mr. Georgios Chrysafis, who chaired the first meeting of the working group, presented an overview of the group's findings and recommendations.

The Bureau concurred with the findings of the working group and the proposals for revision presented by the expert, Professor Harald Baldersheim (document CDDG-Bu(2017)4 and CDDG-Bu(2017)5). Given the Recommendation's continued relevance, any revision should be based on the existing text. It should take into account recent social and political developments and Council of Europe instruments and texts adopted since 2001.

The Bureau welcomed the proposed participation in the working group of two members of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe.

#### 4.4 *Compendium of the most relevant Council of Europe texts in the area of democracy*

The Bureau took note of the information presented and instructed the Secretariat to proceed with updating the Compendium and informing the CDDG on its use in terms of planning purposes as well as on suggestions for promoting its future use, including measures to raise awareness and visibility.

#### 4.5 *Strategy for Innovation and Good Governance*

The Bureau took note of the information presented and:

- welcomed the use made of the Twelve Principles of good democratic governance in the Secretary General's reports on the State of Democracy, Human Rights and the Rule of Law;
- highlighted the universal validity and general applicability of the Twelve Principles for good governance at all levels of government and their relevance for strengthening ethics, transparency and accountability in member States and thus for building trust in public administration and democratic institutions;
- suggested to give due consideration to the Twelve Principles in providing input and contributions for the proposed Conference on the quality of public administration under the Czech Chairmanship.

It welcomed the discussions underway in several member States on implementing the Twelve Principles and the European Label of Governance Excellence (ELoGE) and asked to be kept duly informed about possible applications for accreditation.

The Bureau instructed the Secretariat to report back to the CDDG on the interest in member States to implement the Label.

#### 4.6 *Gender mainstreaming*

The Bureau took note of the information presented and asked the Secretariat, in coordination with the CDDG's Gender Equality Rapporteurs and the Secretariat of the Gender Equality Commission, to present to the CDDG, possibly at its May meeting:

- a short report by the CDDG Gender Equality Rapporteurs on the implications of gender mainstreaming in relation to the Committee's activities and application of the Twelve Principles;
- the findings by the Gender Equality Commission on the implementation of Recommendation CM/Rec (2003)3 on the balanced participation of men and women in political and public decision-making and by the Division of Electoral Assistance and Census on women's political representation in the Eastern Partnership countries under the Programmatic Cooperation Framework 2015-2017.

#### 5. Perspectives for the CDDG in 2018-2019

The Bureau held an exchange of views on the potential for future action and activities by the CDDG. In the discussion, members underlined:

- the continued relevance of and the need for sustained action in the current priority fields of the Committee to address challenges facing democratic society, such as radicalisation and inappropriate populism;
- its potential for further contributing to building strong democratic institutions and achieving more effective inclusion and democratic engagement, on the basis of the recommendations of the Secretary General's annual reports on the state of democracy, human rights and rule of law in, for example, the areas of ethics, transparency and accountability;
- the need to further increase its focus and concrete action through methods such as peer reviews and rapid response service as well as developing new approaches, including handbooks and guidelines;
- the effective contribution by the Centre of Expertise in promoting and maintaining the shared democratic values and standards of the Council of Europe by way of its toolkits and projects in the field.

At its May meeting, the CDDG should carefully examine the Secretary General's priorities and recommendations from the upcoming report on the state of democracy, human rights and the rule of law and discuss on how it could take these forward.

## 6. Developing tools on good democratic governance and supporting reforms

### 6.1 *Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform*

The Bureau took note of report on the Activities of the Centre of Expertise in 2016 and the perspectives for 2017 as set out in document CDDG-Bu(2016)7.

Ms Jutta Gützkow, Head of the Good Governance Division, presented the report, underlining the strong demand for assistance by the Centre, now involving programmes and projects in 25 member States, and its activities promoting and implementing the Twelve Principles. She also outlined the state of preparation for the peer reviews scheduled in Slovenia and Ukraine and the progress on various toolkits, including the toolkit on municipal amalgamation, public ethics benchmarking and others.

The Bureau reiterated the need for member States' input to the work of the Centre in terms of contributions to the toolkits and participation in the peer reviews. This should again be brought to the attention of the delegations at the next CDDG meeting.

## 7 Preparation of the 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the CDDG (11-12 May 2017)

### 7.1 *Draft Agenda*

The Bureau examined the draft agenda and took note of the discussions underway regarding possible high-level participation by the Czech Republic, Greece, Poland, Serbia and Slovenia and contributions to the thematic discussions on administrative and government reforms.

Given the significant number of presentations foreseen and the substantive discussions on key elements of its terms of reference, the Bureau instructed the Secretariat to adjust the agenda as necessary and to draw the attention of the CDDG delegations to the need to ensure their presence for the full two days.

### 7.2 *From public ethics at local level to ethics in public life*

The Bureau took note of the information presented in document CDDG-Bu(2016)15. This item, which had not been discussed at the November 2016 meeting due to a lack of time, sought to address the findings set out in the Secretary General's report 2016 "*State of Democracy, Human Rights and Rule of Law: A security imperative for Europe*".

Based on the Bureau's previous recommendations on this subject, the Secretariat outlined that the following would participate in the discussion under this item:

- representatives from GRECO and the Economic Crime Division of the Council of Europe to present the work of their respective bodies' in this area;
- two experts to present the updated toolkit on Public Ethics Benchmarking as well as the practical experience and impact of the tool in the Basque country;
- an expert on behalf of the Congress who would present the experience and work underway in relation to its European Code of Conduct for the political integrity local and regional elected representatives.

The Bureau welcomed the proposals and instructed the Secretariat to finalise the preparations for the exchange accordingly.

### *7.3 Democratic Governance of metropolitan areas*

The Bureau took note of the information presented in document CDDG-Bu(2017)8 and was informed that Greece had offered to host the Conference in Thessaloniki in connection with the joint Council of Europe-EU Programme on "*Technical assistance on institutional enhancement for local government in Greece*".

The event would include a peer review element in relation to a possible policy framework for the capital city of Athens and the metropolitan area of Thessaloniki, in addition to specific topics that would build on the prior presentations in the CDDG.

Representatives from interested States and metropolitan areas should be invited on the basis of significant experience and examples of innovation in democratic governance of metropolitan areas to contribute to the output of the conference (practical advice to the host country, functional checklists and benchmarks, practical guidelines, etc.).

Representatives from international governmental and non-governmental organisations with specific expertise or which represent metropolitan areas should also be invited. These should include the OECD, the network of European Metropolitan Areas and Regions ('METREX') and other relevant institutions or organisations.

The Secretariat was asked to continue preparations accordingly.

#### 8. Election of two members of the Bureau

The Bureau took note that, due to a change in professional duties, one member of the Bureau, Ms. Inga Nyholm (Finland), had resigned from the Bureau as per 20 March 2017 while Ms. Greta Ulland Billing would be ceasing her activities in the CDDG and resigning from the Bureau as per 31 May 2017.

The Bureau instructed the Secretariat to put the election of two members of the Bureau for the remainder of the mandates on the agenda of the CDDG and delegations should be made aware that the composition of the Bureau should reflect *"in particular geographical distribution, gender balance and, where relevant, legal systems."*

#### 9. Other business

The Bureau took note of the information presented in document CDDG-Bu(2017)10 in particular as regards the World Forum for Democracy on the theme "Is Populism a Problem?" and discussed possibilities opportunities for the CDDG to contribute to the World Forum.

The Vice-Chair reported on his participation in the Conference organised by the Congress and the Committee of the Regions (COR) on the "Role of local and regional authorities in the prevention of corruption and promoting good governance" on 28 February in Brussels.

#### 10. Date of the next meeting

The Bureau took note of the dates of the second plenary meeting, 4-5 December 2017. It asked the Secretariat to remind the CDDG delegations to plan their travel and hotel reservations for the whole duration of the meeting and to reserve sufficiently early in light of the Strasbourg Christmas Market.

## APPENDIX I

## LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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Apologised for absence / excusées

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## APPENDIX II

## AGENDA

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Adoption of the agenda [CDDG-Bu(2017)OJ1]
3. Decisions by the Committee of Ministers of relevance to the work of the CDDG [CDDG-Bu(2017)1]
4. State of implementation of the CDDG activities according to its terms of reference 2016-2017
  - 4.1 *CDDG programme of activities* [CDDG-Bu(2017)2]
  - 4.2 *Civil participation in political decision-making*  
- Report on the meeting of the drafting group and revised draft guidelines [CDDG-Bu(2017)3]
  - 4.3 *Revision of Committee of Ministers' Recommendation CM/Rec(2001)19 on the participation of citizens in local public life*  
- Report on the first meeting of the working group [CDDG-Bu(2017)4]  
- Proposed elements for revision [CDDG-Bu(2017)5]
  - 4.4 *Compendium of the most relevant Council of Europe Texts in the area of democracy*  
- Follow-up to be given [CDDG(2016)22]
  - 4.5 *Strategy for Innovation and Good Governance:*  
- Promotion of the Twelve Principles of good democratic governance [CDDG(2016)23]
  - 4.6 *Gender mainstreaming*  
- Impact of policies and action plans affecting public administration [CDDG-Bu(2017)6]
5. Perspectives for the CDDG in 2018-2019  
*Exchange of views*
6. Developing tools on good democratic governance and supporting reforms
  - 6.1 *Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform* [CDDG-Bu(2017)7]  
- Activities in 2016 and perspectives for 2017  
- Peer Reviews in member States  
- Toolkits

7. Preparation of the 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the CDDG  
(11-12 May 2017)
- 7.1 *Draft agenda* [CDDG(2017)OJ1prov.]
- 7.2 *From public ethics at local level to ethics in public life* [CDDG(2016)15]
- 7.3 *Democratic Governance of Metropolitan Areas*  
- Conference on good democratic governance: preparation [CDDG-Bu(2017)8]
8. Election of two members of the Bureau  
*Exchange of views* [CDDG-Bu(2017)9]
9. Other business [CDDG-Bu(2017)10]  
- *Information about other Council of Europe bodies*  
- *Any other item*
10. Date of the next meeting