



Strasbourg, 10 November 2017

CDDG-Bu(2017)16

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

MEETING REPORT

20 October 2017, Council of Europe, Paris

1. Opening of the meeting

The Chair, Mr Paul Rowsell, opened the meeting and welcomed the participants, in particular Ms Stefánía Traustadóttir (Iceland) and Mr Peter Andre (Austria) for whom it was the first Bureau meeting.

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 by the Committee of Ministers of the "Guidelines for civil participation in political decision-making" ([CM\(2017\)83](#)).

It further took note of the abridged report of the 7th meeting of the CDDG in May (CM(2017)82) as well as the Committee of Ministers' reply to Congress Recommendation 398 (2017) on "Open data for better public services".

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

4.1 *CDDG programme of activities*

The Chair reiterated the need to successfully complete the tasks the CDDG had been set by the Committee of Ministers. Following the adoption of the guidelines for civil participation in political decision-making, the revision of CM/Rec(2001)19 on citizen participation in local public life should now be completed. The CDDG, in all its activities, should focus on delivering added value to member States.

4.2 *Guidelines for civil participation in political decision-making*

The Bureau took note of the adoption by the Committee of Ministers of the guidelines for civil participation in political decision-making and the decision to transmit them to the Parliamentary Assembly, the Commissioner for Human Rights, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe and the European Commission for Democracy through Law (the "Venice Commission") with the invitation to disseminate them and make the widest possible use of the guidelines in their own work.

The Secretariat was instructed to keep the CDDG informed on follow-up given to the guidelines by Council of Europe bodies. At the upcoming CDDG meeting, member States would also be encouraged to give practical effect to the guidelines.

4.3 *Revision of Committee of Ministers' Recommendation Rec(2001)19 on the participation of citizens in local public life*

The Bureau took note of the report by the working group and examined the draft texts of the Recommendation and explanatory report as revised following the final meeting of the working group on 7-8 September 2017 (documents CDDG-Bu(2017)14 and 15). Having considered final amendments proposed by working group members it decided to adopt these and also formulated suggestions to improve the clarity of the text or to avoid perceived negativity.

It instructed the Secretariat to finalise the draft texts in light of the suggestions made and to submit them for approval to the CDDG at its meeting on 4-5 December.

4.4 *Democratic Governance of Metropolitan Areas*

The Vice-Chair and the Secretariat presented a brief oral report on the outcome of the seminar on democratic governance of metropolitan areas which took place on 17-18 October in Thessaloniki in the framework of the joint Council of Europe-EU Programme on "*Technical assistance on institutional enhancement for local government in Greece*".

The Bureau thanked the Greek authorities for the invitation and complimented the Institute of Local Administration (ITA) of Greece for the excellent organisation of the event. A preliminary seminar report would be presented to the CDDG at its December meeting and the Council of Europe experts would elaborate more detailed reports including practical advice to the host country and lessons learned that would provide input for functional checklists and benchmarks or practical guidelines on Metropolitan governance.

Several representatives from member States, metropolitan areas as well as from international governmental and non-governmental organisations (including OECD and METREX) had expressed interest in further multilateral exchanges and cooperation on this subject.

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

The Bureau took note of the work underway to update the Compendium. The updated text would be presented at the next meeting of the CDDG in December.

4.6 *Strategy for Innovation and Good Governance*

The Bureau took note of the revised meeting report of the European Stakeholders' Platform (6 September 2017) (document DG-SP(2017)7 rev.).

In light of questions concerning the application by the European Federation of Local Government Chief Executives (UDITE) by one of the members of the Enlarged Bureau, in its capacity as European Stakeholders' Platform, the Bureau held an in-depth discussion on the issues raised.

The Bureau welcomed the significant number of applications presented to the European Stakeholders' Platform which demonstrated that the improvement of governance was gaining some momentum. It instructed the Secretariat to submit the revised meeting report of the European Stakeholders' Platform meeting to the CDDG with a cover note pointing to the need to review and possibly modify the rules of procedure and regulations and to consider mechanisms, if any, for applications by transregional and transnational institutions or organisations.

4.7 *Public Ethics*

The Bureau took note of the oral information provided by the Secretariat and of the prominent role of the issue in the new draft terms of reference of the CDDG for 2018-2019.

5. CDDG Draft Terms of Reference 2018-2019

The Bureau took note of the oral information concerning the draft terms of reference for 2018-2019 currently under preparation by the Committee of Ministers with a view to their adoption in November.

The proposals for a single plenary meeting per year could free up resources to allow working groups to examine specific themes in greater depth. Thoughtful planning was required to efficiently execute the tasks assigned.

The Secretariat was instructed to prepare a working document for the CDDG December meeting which should include a draft work plan outlining a proposed timeframe, working groups and priorities, and the appointment of rapporteurs and should be centred around:

- public ethics,
- e-democracy,
- the review of Committee of Ministers recommendation Rec(98)12 on the supervision of local authorities' action.

6. Developing tools on good democratic governance and supporting reforms

Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform

The Bureau welcomed the Strategy Plan 2017-2021 of the Centre of Expertise (document CELGR/2017) and looked forward to the presentation of the activity report of the Centre at the plenary meeting of the CDDG.

The Bureau reiterated that delegations' attention should be drawn to the added value of member States actively contributing to the work of the Centre in terms of knowledge and practical experience by way of input to the toolkits and participation in the peer reviews. This could be underlined again in relation to the new terms of reference for 2018-2019.

7 Preparation of the 8th meeting of the CDDG (4-5 December 2017)

Draft Agenda

The Bureau examined the draft agenda and took note of the discussions underway regarding high-level participation envisaged by Ministers from member States and representatives of the UN and the OECD.

Given the high-level presentations, important exchanges foreseen and also the substantive discussions on its terms of reference for 2018-2019, CDDG delegations would need to ensure their presence for the full two days. The Bureau instructed the Secretariat to inform the members.

8. Election of Bureau

The Bureau instructed the Secretariat to put the election of the Chair, Vice-Chair and four members of the Bureau on the agenda of the CDDG. Whilst candidates should have appropriate expertise and experience, the composition of the Bureau should also reflect "*in particular geographical distribution, gender balance and, where relevant, legal systems.*"

9. Other business

The Bureau took note of the information presented on the 33rd Session of the Congress which Mr Damien Feraille had attended on behalf of the CDDG the previous day. He provided an overview of debates on topics that also related to the work of the Committee including:

- regional co-operation and democracy in Europe;
- women's participation in political life at regional level;
- the situation of Catalonia in Spain; and
- the fight against corruption with the adoption of Recommendation 405 (2017) – "Making public procurement transparent at local and regional levels".

10. Date of the next meeting

In light of the discussions of the CDDG's new terms of reference for 2018-2019, the Bureau instructed the Secretariat to propose suitable dates for the Bureau meetings in 2018.

APPENDIX I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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APPENDIX II

AGENDA

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Adoption of the agenda [CDDG-Bu(2017)OJ2]
3. Decisions by the Committee of Ministers of relevance to the work of the CDDG [CDDG-Bu(2017)12]
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)13]
 - 4.2 *Guidelines for civil participation in political decision-making*
- Discussion in the Ministers' Deputies: oral information
 - 4.3 *Revision of Committee of Ministers' Recommendation Rec(2001)19 on the participation of citizens in local public life*
- Report on the third meeting of the working group [GT-PC(2017)13]
- Draft revised Recommendation [CDDG-Bu(2017)14]
- Draft explanatory report [CDDG-Bu(2017)15]
 - 4.4 *Democratic Governance of Metropolitan Areas*
- Conference on good democratic governance in Metropolitan Areas (Thessaloniki, 17-18 October 2017): oral information
 - 4.5 *Compendium of the most relevant Council of Europe Texts in the area of democracy*
- Update of the Compendium: oral information
 - 4.6 *Strategy for Innovation and Good Governance:*
- Report on the meeting of the Enlarged Bureau acting as European Stakeholders' Platform of the Strategy for Innovation and Governance at Local Level (6 September 2017, Strasbourg) [DG-SP(2017)7 rev.]
- Promotion of the Twelve Principles of good governance in member States: see above and 6
 - 4.7 *Public ethics*
- Follow-up to the decisions taken at the CDDG meeting of 11-12 May 2017: oral information

5. CDDG Draft Terms of Reference 2018-2019
6. Developing tools on good democratic governance and supporting reforms

Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform
- Activities of the Centre in 2017: oral presentation
- Strategy 2017-2021

7. Preparation of the 8th meeting of the CDDG
(4-5 December 2017)

Draft agenda

[CDDG(2017)OJ2 prov.]

8. Other business
- *Information about other Council of Europe bodies: oral information*
- *Any other item*
9. Date of the next meeting