

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Strasbourg, 15 September 2020

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**11th PLENARY MEETING OF THE
EUROPEAN COMMITTEE ON DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE
(CDDG)
10-11 SEPTEMBER 2020, BY VIDEOCONFERENCE**

ABRIDGED REPORT

At its 11th plenary meeting (10-11 September 2020, by videoconference), the European Committee on Democracy and Governance (CDDG):

1. adopted the agenda of the meeting, which was chaired by Mr Markku Mölläri (Vice-Chair, Finland), as Chair *ad interim*;

Information

2. took note of the Chair *ad interim*'s information concerning the continuity of the work of the CDDG during the Covid-19 emergency, namely the active role played by the Bureau with five meetings held since March 2020, and the organisation of the CDDG thematic meeting on "[A democratic governance response to Covid-19](#)" (18 June 2020, by videoconference);

3. held exchanges of views on a number of Council of Europe developments in areas relating to its terms of reference with Ms Snežana Samardžić-Marković, Director General of Democracy, and Ms Claudia Luciani, Director of Human Dignity, Equality and Governance;

State of implementation of the CDDG activities according to its terms of reference 2020-2021

4. discussed and gave it final approval to the guidelines on e-democracy in the form of a toolkit (the [Handbook on e-democracy](#)), encouraging the Centre of Expertise for Good Governance to use the Handbook as a basis for developing tools and cooperation activities;

5. updated the "[Guide on public ethics - Steps to implementing public ethics in public organisations](#)" and took note of the new [toolkit on public ethics](#) addressed to central authorities, which was presented by Mr Alan Doig, expert consultant of the Centre of Expertise for Good Governance;

6. took note that Turkey had appointed two experts to join the working group on democracy and technology (GT-DT) and the working group on accountability (GT-RE) as members and held an exchange of views on the progress of work of both working groups, on the basis of presentations by their respective Chairpersons, Mr Almir Sahović (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Mr Paul-Henri Philips (Belgium, Brussels Capital Region);

7. heard an update from Mr Peter Andre (Austria), CDDG Rapporteur on democracy and technology and CDDG representative to the Ad hoc Committee on Artificial Intelligence (CAHAI), about the CAHAI's recent and forthcoming activities;

8. held an exchange of views on the state of implementation of the terms of reference of the CDDG for 2020-2021, also in the light of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, and discussed possible future priorities and working methods;

Secretary General's request for input to prepare a four-year strategic framework

9. took note of the letter by the Secretary General to the Chair *ad interim* of the CDDG; held an exchange of views on the questions it raised (key priorities and the role of the Council of Europe, governance and working methods, lessons learnt from the Covid-19 crisis); and asked members who wished to provide elements for the reply of the Chair *ad interim* to transmit them in writing to the Secretariat by 18 September 2020;

Democratic governance and Covid-19

10. discussed a [draft report on "Democratic Governance and Covid-19"](#) and agreed to examine a revised version at its 12th meeting, in view of its final approval;

11. encouraged members of the CDDG to reply to the Rapid Response Service No. 38 on "Democratic governance and Covid-19" and/or to send updates by 16 October 2020, with a view to contributing to the preparation of the report on "Democratic Governance and Covid-19" and to update the [webpage](#) providing information on national responses to the Covid-19 emergency;

12. held an exchange of views on "Elections and Covid-19" with Ms Simona Granata-Menghini, Secretary *ad interim* of the Venice Commission, in the light of the recent report by the Venice Commission on "Respect for democracy, human rights and the rule of law during states of emergency";

13. heard presentations by the Secretariat respectively on a "[Survey on the functioning of local self-government units in Serbia during COVID-19](#)", which was conducted amongst local authorities in Serbia in the context of the programme *Human Resources Management in local self – government – phase 2*, and on the key findings of a similar survey conducted in the context of the project "[Democratic development, Decentralisation and Good Governance in Armenia](#)", both implemented by the Centre of Expertise for Good Governance;

European Label of Governance Excellence (ELOGE)

14. heard an update by the Secretariat on the implementation of the European Label of Governance Excellence (ELOGE) including a presentation of the [new webpage](#) and the applicable regulations;

15. held an exchange of views with Mr Helfried Carl, Senior Director of the Innovation in Politics Institute, on the European Capital of Democracy project, an initiative supported by the Council of Europe and which relies on the 12 Principles of Good Democratic Governance;

Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers

16. took note of the achievements of the Georgian Presidency of the Committee of Ministers in the period November 2019-May 2020, as well as of the priorities of the Greek Presidency for the period May-November 2020;

Activities of other Council of Europe bodies and structures

17. took note of the information provided by the Secretariat on activities of particular interest to the CDDG carried out by other Council of Europe bodies and structures;

18. was informed that the 2020 edition of the World Forum for Democracy with the title "Can Democracy Save the environment ?" would be postponed to November 2021 and that a series of online events, to which the CDDG itself could actively contribute, would be launched as from November 2020 with a view to preparing the ground for it;

19. heard presentations by representatives of the Conference of International Non-Governmental Organisations (CINGO) and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on these bodies respective activities; took note of the information provided by the Secretariat of the Elections and Civil Participation Division and the Centre of Expertise for Good Governance on their ongoing and future work;

Elections to the Bureau of the CDDG

20. took note of the information provided by the Secretariat on holding elections during the 12th meeting of the CDDG, namely as regards the positions to be filled, the deadline for putting forward candidatures and the online voting modalities should the 12th meeting be held online; asked its Bureau to suggest measures to enable members to present their candidatures;

Date and place of the next meeting

21. took note that the next meeting would be held on 25-27 November 2020, most likely by videoconference.