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**EUROPEAN COMMITTEE ON DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE
(CDDG)**

REPORT OF THE 14th PLENARY MEETING

**29-30 November 2021
Strasbourg and by videoconference**

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

1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

The meeting was opened with Mr Markku Mölläri (Finland) in the Chair. He welcomed members and other participants. The list of participants appears in Appendix 1. The Committee adopted its agenda as it appears in Appendix 2.

2. Information on recent activities and developments

The Committee heard a statement by the Chair, in which he referred to lessons learnt from the on-going pandemic, the risk of digital fatigue and the fact that the CDDG had managed to implement its tasks despite all this. The Chair referred to his recent attendance of the third edition of the Madrid International Forum on Democracy (25-28 November) dedicated to "Good governance to safeguard democracy after the pandemic" in which he addressed participants from different countries including many MPs and at which comments were made about declining standards of democracy and elected representatives, the increasing role of social media and the importance of the opposition in a democracy (it should be involved, also to carry out major reforms). The Chair also briefed participants about the meeting of the Bureau of 14-15 October and the working breakfast it had with the Committee of Ministers' rapporteur group on democracy (GR-DEM). He then emphasised the importance of this last meeting of the biennium, which would allow to take stock of the work done.

Exchange of views with Ms Claudia Luciani, Director of Human Dignity, Equality and Governance

Ms Luciani informed the Committee that the budget had been adopted (with zero real growth, as opposed to zero nominal growth) for the next four years, together with the terms of reference of intergovernmental committees, giving better strategic vision and predictability for future work. The CDDG had an important contribution to make to the new Committee on Artificial Intelligence (CAI) regarding democracy-related issues, including addressing the digital divide. The recently concluded World Forum for Democracy had highlighted i.a. that democracy and human rights and a free press were essential for tackling challenges to the environment and climate. It also demonstrated how cooperation between all levels of government was important. The upcoming work of the CDDG on good democratic governance, green public administration and new forms of democracy were thus timely. Ms Luciani welcomed the increased interactions with the Centre of Expertise for Good Governance; the combination of standard setting and practical implementation was a strength. She also pointed out that the European Label of Governance Excellence (ELOGE) was instrumental for the implementation of the 12 Principles of good democratic governance. Ms Luciani also provided information about the new Committee of Ministers [Resolution CM/Res\(2021\)3](#), which will govern as from 1 January 2022 the functioning of intergovernmental committees and would facilitate the holding of hybrid meetings. Ms Luciani also mentioned the desire to expand youth involvement in decision making from the sectoral approach on youth policy, towards a more transversal approach throughout the organisation.

The Chair and participants sought further information and expressed views on the impact of the new Resolution CM/Res(2021)3, Ms Luciani's recent visit to Cyprus to discuss local government reforms, the importance of deliberative and participatory democracy and the challenge of getting young people comfortable with public fora, the need for more/better citizen education in the context of the pandemic, the importance of certain reforms at the Council of Europe etc.

Information by the Secretariat

Ms Alina Tatarenko, as the new Head of Division of Democratic Governance and Secretary of the CDDG, introduced herself and other colleagues and teams from the Division of elections and participatory democracy, and gave some practical information about the organisation of the meeting.

The CDDG took note of the above information.

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

The Secretariat presented the state of implementation of activities with regard to the terms of reference for 2020-2021, as outlined in document [CDDG\(2021\)13](#). This 14th meeting would allow the Committee to complete two specific tasks (item 3.1 and 3.2 below) and to contribute further to the implementation of general tasks, in particular through exchanges of experience, the development of interactions with other bodies and consultations on legal instruments and their implementation (items 4, 6, 8 and 9 below). The Committee noted with satisfaction that, at the end of the biennium 2020-2021, its terms of reference for that period have been successfully implemented, both with regard to the general and the specific tasks, despite the health crisis and its consequences.

3.1 Democracy and technology

The Committee heard an oral presentation by Mr Almir Šahović, Chair of the Working Group on democracy and technology (GT-DT), on the overall progress of its work. He referred to the reports of the informal meeting held with the participation of Election Management Bodies (EMBs) (document [GT-DT\(2021\)2-Informal meeting](#)) and of the 5th meeting (document [GT-DT\(2021\)5](#)).

Mr Šahović recalled that the CDDG had agreed to prepare a set of guidelines, rather than a draft recommendation, with regards to task ii "Developing standards on new technologies and the different stages of the electoral process (including voter registration, transmission and tabulation of results, etc.) in the form of a Committee of Ministers' recommendation or guidelines." He expressed appreciation for the involvement of EMBs in the drafting process and the scientific experts' support. He also reminded participants that the CDDG "[Study on the impact of digital transformation on democracy and good governance](#)" was available on-line and encouraged members to disseminate it.

Ms Ardita Driza Maurer, University of Zurich, Switzerland, independent expert, presented the final draft of the Guidelines on the use of ICT in the electoral process (document [CDDG\(2021\)14](#)), outlining its overall structure and scope. Certain concepts would be new in the electoral field, such as assumptions about the operational environment, the minimum level of implementation of principles or the management of risks. In the discussion, members expressed their support for the document, underlining its practical value, and agreed to amend the definition of assumptions in the glossary.

Thereafter, the Committee approved the draft guidelines and entrusted the Secretariat to include possible editorial and other changes recommended by the editorial department and Office of the legal advisor (the draft had been sent to them for review) before transmission of the document to the Committee of Ministers.

The Committee heard an oral report by Mr Peter Andre, Rapporteur on democracy and technology, on the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on Artificial Intelligence (CAHAI) and its working groups in which he participated as the representative of the CDDG. He recalled that the CAHAI had adopted a "*Feasibility study on a legal framework on AI design, development and application based on Council of Europe standards*" in 2020, and would debate a document on "*Possible elements of a legal framework on artificial intelligence, based on the Council of Europe's standards on human rights, democracy and the rule of law*" during its 6th plenary (30 November-2 December). The impact of AI on the functioning of democracy, democratic governance and participation has been addressed to some extent only. As a result of the preliminary work, a new Committee for Artificial Intelligence (CAI) has been tasked, as from January 2022, to prepare a draft legal instrument. The CDDG could be invited to contribute to the process.

3.2 Democratic accountability

The Committee heard a presentation by Mr Paul-Henri Philips (Belgium), chair of the Working Group on accountability (GT-RE), and the Secretariat on progress made by the working group and on the final version of the draft Recommendation for the Committee of Ministers on democratic accountability of elected officials and elected bodies at local and regional level (document [CDDG\(2021\)15](#)). Mr Philips recalled the history of the GT-RE's work and referred participants to the reports of the last two meetings held in June and September (documents [GT-RE\(2021\)4](#) and [GT-RE\(2021\)7](#)). The working group and the Committee had agreed that the concept of democratic accountability had broader implications than just the popular recall (of elected officials and elected bodies) and he recalled participants how the quest for a common terminological ground in both official languages led eventually to the concept of "redevabilité" in French being preferred to that of "responsabilité" for its more inclusive meaning. He also thanked the academic experts who had assisted in the work, Mr Arnaud Duranthon, senior lecturer at the Strasbourg University, and Prof Marc Philp from the University of Warwick, United Kingdom.

The Secretariat then presented the structure and general content of the draft Recommendation and its appendix, stressing in particular that during the last revision, in an effort to increase consistency, the two earlier annexes containing the guidelines were merged into one, with fewer subtitles. The draft had also been sent for technical and linguistic review to the editorial and to the legal advice services; their feedback would be provided in the next few days. The Secretariat also referred to the Study on the democratic accountability of local and regional elected representatives which had been produced with the support of Mr Duranthon, in the context of the GT-RE's work.

The Committee considered the draft Recommendation and welcomed the recent changes. Following a proposal by the United Kingdom, it agreed to slightly amend the definition of "accountable" in section 1.1 of the annex. The Committee approved the draft and entrusted the Secretariat to include possible editorial and other changes recommended by the editorial department and Office of the legal advisor before transmission of the document to the Committee of Ministers. The Committee also approved the Study, as a useful additional guidance document, to be published on the CDDG's website.

4. Promoting democratic governance through shared experience

Exchange of views with Ms Romina Kuko, Deputy Minister of Interior, Albania

In her presentation, Ms Kuko stated that thanks to major reforms conducted six years ago, fragmentation of local authorities was not an issue in Albania, which counted at present 61 municipalities with decentralised competences and extended territorial coverage. The earthquake in 2019, followed by the pandemic, represented a major challenge and demonstrated the importance of resilience building policies. Albania organises every year a competition for municipalities to showcase their good practices; this has proven useful to develop the ownership of reforms and quality of service e.g. in areas such as waste management, fire protection, the management of retail sale markets etc. Current reforms in the area of municipalities are focused on salary schemes, cutting down on bureaucracy and red tape management of public affairs. The project implemented by the Centre of Expertise for Good Governance resulted in a successful Public Administration Portal launched in 2019. A new project proposal is being discussed with the Centre of Expertise.

Exchange of views with Mr Vendelín Leitner, State Secretary, Ministry of Interior, Slovak Republic

Mr Leitner thanked the Centre of Expertise for support provided to the local government reform in the Slovak Republic, through two EU-funded projects. The projects' activities included peer reviews and policy advice, notably on the issues of administrative division, competencies, as well as capacity building for local authorities. Current needs included further decentralisation efforts, a better division of competences between territorial levels, addressing fragmentation, reviewing the role of mayoral functions and financial equalisation.

One of the projects also focuses on the review of the status of the Capital city Bratislava and the city of Kosice, and a variety of measures to improve public ethics and corruption prevention. The committee responsible for the steering of public administration reform was established in October 2021 and it focuses, among others, on building public support for implementing reforms.

Exchange of views with Mr Vache Terteryan, Deputy Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure, Armenia

Mr Terteryan expressed gratitude to the Centre of Expertise for Good Governance and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities for their support, provided through the cooperation projects. In a powerpoint presentation, he then gave an update on current territorial reforms, which had allowed to reduce the number of municipalities from over 900 to just 79. The process was still under way. The main areas of reforms have been the effective management and good governance at local level and ensuring public participation. A unified information system was being set-up in each territorial community, with a central citizen office, to improve service delivery and access via the Internet (more than 60 services are at present available on-line). Local elections held on 5 December would be based on a new system of proportional representation, of which it was expected that it would increase participation.

The CDDG took note of the information provided by the above-mentioned members of government. Participants sought further clarification on success factors leading to the reduction of municipalities, the conduct of salary reforms, possible experience with incentives for city inhabitants to relocate to the rural areas, the expected timelines for certain reforms to become visible to the population, the mandatory vs. voluntary approaches to territorial amalgamation, and lessons learnt from amalgamation processes regarding overcoming of challenges.

Presentation of current developments or on-going reforms by members of the CDDG

During the meeting delegations had opportunities, under the present item, to inform the Committee about developments or on-going reforms. The information provided concerned:

- in Belgium (Flanders): plans to reduce the overall administrative supervision, to abolish mandatory voting for local elections and other electoral changes, and to amalgamate municipalities (with incentives such as, for instance, a transfer of debts to the regional level for mergers with a minimum of 20,000 inhabitants and the creation of additional aldermen/-women;
- in Cyprus: the local government reform has been debated for 10 years; three draft laws are now in parliament, for possible adoption by the end of the year, providing for a transfer of additional competences and finances, the creation of 300 inter-municipal entities, increased efficiency in urban planning and service delivery; the local elections have been postponed (and would coincide with the next European parliament elections), in order to facilitate the adoption of legislative changes;

- in Malta: in the context of the Covid crisis, the government assisted local communities with mitigating measures including a law allowing for remote or hybrid meetings; in 2022, a new local governance policy will be implemented based on 10 pillars (e.g. education, environment) and the territorial reform would lead to the creation of 6 regions (instead of 5) with a transfer of certain competences from municipalities (e.g. waste management); an ICT strategy is being implemented to replace and unify the equipment and platforms of local authorities across the country;
- in the Netherlands: recent projects for empowering of citizens through education, awareness-raising, participatory initiatives and measures to foster a capacity of self-judgement and the responsible use of social media, training the trainers for elderly care workers;
- in Norway: positive experience with remote voting (for the first time ever, at the elections in September 58% of votes have been cast before the election day) and measures to facilitate the voting of people in isolated areas, projects to facilitate the splitting of municipalities or counties previously amalgamated "by force" through legislation (candidates should come forward by 2024);
- in the United Kingdom: current developments in the new country-wide "levelling-up" policy to reduce inequalities between regions and improve living conditions and the economy by a broad range of measures including extra funding for the local authorities, further competences to be devolved to local areas (ideally if adequate accountable mechanisms are in place and mayors are directly elected), unitarisation of areas to reach the threshold of 500,000 inhabitants in order to increase quality of services and save money.

State of signatures and ratifications of conventions under the responsibility of the CDDG; feedback from member States

The Secretariat recalled that a standard general task included in all steering committees' terms of reference provides that the CDDG carries out periodic examinations of some or all of the conventions for which it has been given responsibility and reports back to the Committee of Ministers¹, and that the Bureau had considered that this matter should be given more prominence. Accordingly, document [CDDG\(2021\)17](#) was submitted to the CDDG regarding the seven conventions in question². The Secretariat gave an overview of the main trends, in particular the significant differences in the number of State parties.

¹ Task (x) of the CDDG's terms of reference 2020-2021 and task (xv) of those for 2022-2025

² The list appears in a Committee of Ministers document listed in footnote in the terms of reference. The treaties concerned are the following:

- European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Cooperation between Territorial Communities or Authorities (CETS 106) and its additional Protocol (CETS 159); Second protocol concerning interterritorial co-operation (CETS 169); third Protocol concerning Euroregional Co-operation Groupings (CETS 206),
- European Charter of Local Self-Government (CETS 122) and its additional Protocol (CETS 207) on the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority,
- Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level (CETS 144).

In the ensuing discussion, the Belgian and United Kingdom delegations provided information on the State of play with regard to further ratification plans under way or the fact that bilateral agreements sometimes offered more practical solutions than a multilateral convention such as the European outline Convention on Transfrontier Cooperation between Territorial Communities or Authorities (CETS 106). Participants and the Chair also commented on the importance of these stock-taking exercises, the scope of such periodic examinations and feedback to be provided to the Committee of Ministers, and the need to have information submitted by countries in writing in future. Having taken note of the information made available, the Committee agreed to resume consideration of this subject at its next meeting.

5. Terms of reference of the CDDG (2022-2025) and outlook of activities 2022

The Secretariat referred to the terms of reference of the CDDG adopted by the Committee of Ministers in the week preceding the 14th meeting (document [CDDG\(2021\)18](#)) and presented the proposal to create three working groups with dedicated mandates, as outlined in document [CDDG\(2021\)20](#), to deal with the first three specific tasks of the terms of reference requiring completion by the end of 2023:

- **GT-BG** [*Groupe de travail bonne gouvernance démocratique*]: (i) Draft Recommendation on Principles of good democratic governance of general application to all levels of government, building on the 12 Principles of Good Democratic Governance at local level;
- **GT-DD** [*Groupe de travail démocratie délibérative et participative*]: (ii) Report on the new forms of deliberative and participatory democracy (...);
- **GT-AV** [*Groupe de travail administration verte*]: (iii) Report on green public administration aimed at collecting and disseminating good practice and case studies and identifying guidance for administrations at local, regional and national level (...).

The Committee considered a possible resulting workplan and agenda of meetings in 2022, as set out in document [CDDG\(2021\)19](#). The Secretariat recalled that working group members should ideally be persons with specific expertise matching the task of each working group and who – as a result – may not necessarily be the regular representative(s) of their country to the CDDG. The first two working groups could start operations in the beginning of 2022 whilst the third one could start in 2023 with some preparatory work before the end of 2022.

After discussions, the Committee adopted the terms of reference of the working groups, with amendments concerning the GT-AV with a broader range of specialisations for its members, and agreeing to have the GT-DD (task ii) hold its first meeting in May (rather than in March 2022, as in the draft). The work plan for 2022 was thus approved, with an amended provisional calendar of meetings appearing in Appendix 3. The terms of reference of the first three working groups, as approved, appear in Appendix 4. The Committee invited countries interested to propose nominations of experts by 20 December 2021 for the GT-BG and by 21 January 2022 for the GT-DD.

It also entrusted the Bureau with the assistance of the Secretariat to prepare a list of countries for which the Council of Europe would bear the experts' costs, for approval by the CDDG by written procedure.

6. Activities of the Centre of Expertise for Good Governance

The Committee heard a presentation by the Secretariat on the Annual Activity Report of the Centre of Expertise for Good Governance, including cooperation activities and projects in Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Estonia, Greece, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, the Slovak Republic, Serbia, Ukraine. The Report also referred to recent activities with regards to the European Label of Governance Excellence (ELOGE). Participants took note of the information provided and expressed appreciation for the work of the Centre of Expertise. The CDDG also took note of the new Strategic Plan of the Centre of Expertise for 2022-25, and a separate document providing an update on the implementation of the ELOGE.

7. Presidency of the Committee of Ministers

The Committee heard an update by Mr David Kojza on priorities and activities under the [Hungarian presidency](#) which ended mid-November, including the online international conference on 26 October to discuss the challenges governments face to regulate artificial intelligence (AI) and the conference of ministers of justice held in Gödöllő on 5 October on "Digital Technology and Artificial Intelligence – New Challenges for Justice in Europe", the conference held on 7 September in Budapest on "The role of NGOs and research institutes in promoting Council of Europe norms and standards on national minority rights". Two events under the Presidency were organised in cooperation with the Centre of Expertise: a Conference on Cross-Border Cooperation in September, and the Award Ceremonies for the European Label of Governance Excellence and Best Practice in local governance in November, both in Budapest.

Mr Francesco Giustino gave an overview of the priorities and programme of the **Italian presidency** (see also the official [agenda released on 16 November](#)), stressing the importance Italy attaches to the Council of Europe and his country's desire to promote certain areas under its presidency, including the protection of cultural heritage, gender-based violence and violence against women, equality between women and men, the importance of a future centred on human beings, democracy and technology (for instance in relation to cybercrime), artificial intelligence and human rights.

As regards the future **Icelandic presidency**, Ms Stefania Traustadóttir recalled that a new Icelandic government had been formed just recently. The Permanent Representation of Iceland to the Council of Europe was working on possible priorities and these might include green policies, women's rights and children's rights, among others.

The CDDG took note of the information.

8. Activities of the Committee of Ministers and other Council of Europe bodies

Exchange of views with Mr Leendert Verbeek, new Chair of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities

In his presentation, Mr Verbeek highlighted the importance of exchanges between the Congress and the CDDG and to build further on this cooperation, and referred to the current Congress' priority areas for 2021-2026 (outlined in document [CDDG\(2021\)24](#)): effective local and regional responses to public health crises, the quality of representative democracy and citizen participation, reducing inequalities in the field of environmental issues and climate action in cities and regions, digitalisation and artificial intelligence in the local context. He referred to upcoming reports prepared by the Congress, including on deliberative processes and its monitoring activities, and to the interest of the Congress in future work of the CDDG especially specific tasks i) and ii) of its terms of reference. He also commented on the work being finalised by the CDDG, the recent adoption of rules of conduct for Congress members, the importance of multilevel governance to address the current challenges of democracy and he invited the CDDG to make best use of the work of the Congress.

He finally expressed the availability of the Chair of the Committee on Governance, Ms Jelena Drenjanin (Sweden) for a future exchange of views with the CDDG. The CDDG took note of this proposal and the information provided, and participants sought further views on areas offering opportunities for joint work (e.g. recommendation on good governance, the importance of the Charter and revitalising decentralisation after the Covid crisis), the strategic plan of the Congress and its implications.

Exchange of views with Mr Gerhard Ermischer, Chair of the Conference of international non-governmental organisations (CINGO)

Mr Ermischer briefed participants about many recent reforms carried out by the CINGO including the creation of various dedicated committees that would ideally enable 50% of CINGO's members to be involved in the work, the simplification of structures, its strategic plan for 2021-2024 (which was closely aligned on the priorities of the Secretary General).

He further commented on the importance of some of the future tasks of the CDDG under its new terms of reference, the importance of artificial intelligence and its many challenges as showcased by recent scandals, the plans of CINGO to develop links with local Council of Europe offices and civil society organisations, which do not meet the criteria to be permanently part of the Conference. During the ensuing questions and answers session, he referred to the publication of a handbook on NGO law on 8 December. The CDDG took note of the information provided.

Recent activities of other Council of Europe bodies; Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 2212 (2021) "More participatory democracy to tackle climate change"

The Committee heard a presentation on the activities of the Division on elections and participatory democracy by its Secretariat. The Division, which is located in the same department as the secretariat of the CDDG and the Centre of expertise, is now reporting every year to the CDDG about its work which is of particular relevance to the Committee. After a brief introduction to the annual report (reproduced in the addendum of this report) and the priorities of the Division (addressing the democratic back sliding, developing citizen participation and bringing them back to voting, bringing elected officials closer to the voters to help rebuild trust, developing cooperation with EMBs, civil society, municipalities and other public authorities), the Secretariat of the Division referred to cooperation opportunities with the CDDG, including in respect of tasks set in the Committee's terms of reference concerning civil participation and elections (e.g. periodic reviews of CM/Rec(2017)5 – see item 9 below).

The Committee heard a presentation by the gender equality rapporteurs Mr Edwin Lefebvre (Belgium, Flanders) and Ms Siobhan Smyth (United Kingdom) about their role and recent work. They invited delegations to send information in writing on gender equality aspects, which would be of relevance for the CDDG's own activities. The Secretariat mentioned that the guidelines on gender mainstreaming in the work of the CDDG are published on the CDDG's website ([link](#)).

The Secretariat presented a memorandum on activities of particular interest to the CDDG carried out by other Council of Europe bodies since the 13th meeting (document [CDDG\(2021\)25](#)). The Committee took note of the information contained therein.

The Secretariat also referred to the recent Committee of Ministers' request for comments from the CDDG on Assembly Recommendation 2212 (2021) "More participatory democracy to tackle climate change" and the draft comments contained in document [CDDG\(2021\)30](#). The CDDG considered and adopted a slightly amended version of the document, with updates dictated by the recent adoption of the CDDG's terms of reference.

9. Review on Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)5 on standards for e-voting

The Chair recalled that the CDDG was tasked with reviewing the implementation of [Recommendation CM/Rec \(2017\)5 on standards for e-voting](#) at least every two years³. A questionnaire had been sent out to all member States, and in cooperation with the Venice Commission also to the national election management bodies (EMBs) with a view to collecting information in preparation of the meeting. 32 member States, including EMBs, had replied to the questionnaire. A compilation of these replies was made available in an [addendum](#) to the horizontal summary contained in document [CDDG\(2021\)27](#).

³ In accordance with para. 1(iv) of the Recommendation; the terms of reference 2021-2025 provide among the main deliverables (item 8) for a more comprehensive similar exercise before the end of 2025. Also, para. 2 of the Recommendation calls for a regular update of the Guidelines.

The CDDG heard an oral presentation by Mr Gregor Wenda, former Chair of the Ad hoc Committee of Experts on legal, operational and technical standards for e-voting (CAHVE), who recalled the work that had been conducted since 2004 in this field. While currently only a few member States were using e-voting, the responses demonstrated that in general, information and communication technologies (ICT) were widely used throughout the electoral process, which made the Guidelines on the use of ICT – adopted under item 3.1 – particularly valuable. Several member States were in the process of introducing or up-dating legislation on e-voting and some had stressed the particular importance of the Recommendation in this context. Security concerns, lack of public trust, costs, and lack of political consensus were among the reasons member States had mentioned for not implementing e-voting solutions.

The ensuing discussion, to which representatives of EMBs had also been specifically invited, centred around trust, obstacles to introducing e-voting, transparency (e.g. publishing source code), experience with voting machines, and the need for the accompanying Guidelines to remain a living document. Mr Wenda underlined that the introduction of e-voting required careful legal, organisational and technical preparation. This was one of the reasons why the pandemic had not led to a spike in e-voting solutions. The CDDG expressed the wish to pursue interactions in the future with the Venice Commission and EMBs, which welcomed this opportunity for exchange. The CDDG concluded that reviewing the implementation of the Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)5 every two years was an appropriate timeframe. It took note of suggestions to further develop the format of the review meeting by devoting more time to exchanges on best practice, by possibly involving other relevant stakeholders aside from EMBs (e.g. civil society, academia), and including in the review the newly adopted Guidelines on the use of ICT in the electoral process whilst retaining the basic questionnaire structure for comparative purposes across time, with a few additional questions on specific topical aspects.

10. Elections

The Secretariat provided background information (recalling i.a. that the duration of terms of office of the Chair, Vice-Chair and Bureau members remained unchanged with the introduction of quadrennial terms of reference) and presented the candidatures received (documents [CDDG\(2021\)28](#) and [CDDG\(2021\)29](#)) which matched exactly the positions to be filled. The Committee then elected by acclamation, and subsequently congratulated for their election:

- as Chair: Mr Paul Rowsell (United Kingdom) for one year;
- as Vice-Chair: Mr Edwin Lefebre (Belgium, Flemish Region) for one year;
- as Bureau members: Mr Peter Andre (Austria) for two years, Ms Monika Kurian (Slovak Republic) for two years, Ms Gordana Gapikj-Dimitrovska (North Macedonia) for two years, Mr Markku Mölläri (Finland) for two years, Ms Stefania Traustadóttir (Iceland) for a one-year term.

11. Other business

The Secretariat recalled that the Committee had appointed four rapporteurs to cover three areas over the finishing biennium, and provided further information on the foreseeable needs for rapporteurs in the near future. The Committee then renewed the mandates of the current rapporteurs as follows: Mr Edwin Lefebvre (Belgium, Flemish Region) and Ms Siobhan Smyth (United Kingdom) for Gender equality; Mr Peter Andre (Austria) for Democracy and Technology, including liaison with the new committee on artificial intelligence; Mr Markku Mölläri (Finland) for a slightly extended area covering social matters including rights of persons with disabilities.

The Committee thanked Mr Paul-Henri Philips (Belgium) on the occasion of his retirement, for his 21 years of service, commitment and contribution to the Committee, and wished him well for the future.

12. Adoption of the abridged meeting report; date of the next meeting

The Committee considered and adopted the draft abridged report. CDDG members would receive in the following days the full version of the meeting report. The Committee took note that the 15th meeting would be held on 21-22 April (modalities to be defined), in accordance with the tentative workplan approved previously for 2022 (see item 5).

The Chair thanked participants, the Secretariat and the interpreters and closed the meeting.

APPENDIX 1**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS****MEMBERS / MEMBRES****CHAIR / PRESIDENT**

Mr Markku MÖLLÄRI, Ministerial adviser, Department for Local Affairs and Regional Administration, Ministry of Finance, Helsinki

ALBANIA / ALBANIE

Ms Romina KUKO, Deputy Minister of Interior

ARMENIA / ARMENIE

Mr Vache TERTERYAN, Deputy Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure, YEREVAN

AUSTRIA / AUTRICHE

Mr Peter ANDRE, Ministry of Interior, Senior Expert for Legal Affairs, Wien

Mag. Stefan GÖLLER, Legal expert, Office of the Vienna Provincial Government, Department for European Affairs, Wien

Mr Gregor WENDA, Deputy Head of Electoral Affairs Department, Directorate General of Legal Affairs, Federal Ministry of the Interior, Vienna

AZERBAIJAN / AZERBAÏDJAN

Mr Emin ASLANOV, senior advisor, Department of Foreign Policy Affairs of the Presidential Administration of the Republic of Azerbaijan

Mr Seymur NAGHIYEV, Chief Advisor, Ministry of Justice, Centre for Work with Municipalities, Baku

BELGIUM / BELGIQUE

M. Paul-Henri PHILIPS, Coordinateur pour les Organisations Internationales, Relations multilatérales et Organisations Internationales, BRUXELLES

Mr Edwin LEFEBRE, Deputy Director, Ministry of the Flemish Community, Agency for Home Affairs, Brussels, Belgium

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA / BOSNIE-HERZEGOVINE

Ambassador Almir ŠAHOVIĆ, Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo

BULGARIA / BULGARIE

Mr Mihail VASILEV, State expert, Directorate "Spatial Development and Administrative-territorial Structure", Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works, SOFIA, Bulgaria

CROATIA / CROATIE

Ms Leda LEPRI, Senior Advisor – Specialist

CYPRUS / CHYPRE

Mr Antonis ECONOMIDES, Head of Local Government Directorate, Ministry of the Interior, NICOSIA

CZECH REPUBLIC / REPUBLIQUE TCHEQUE

Mr Petr FEJTEK, Senior Administrative Advisor, Department for Strategic Development and Coordination of Public Administration, Ministry of Interior of the Czech Republic, Praha

DENMARK / DANEMARK

Mr Mads HOLT, Administrative Officer, Department of Public Administrative Law, Ministry of the Interior and Housing, COPENHAGEN

ESTONIA / ESTONIE

Mr Ave VIKS, Adviser, Regional Administration Policy Department, Ministry of Finance

FRANCE

Ms Mathilde CISOWSKI, Chargée d'études juridiques, Direction générale des collectivités locales, Ministère de la cohésion des territoires et des relations avec les collectivités territoriales, PARIS

GEORGIA / GEORGIE

Mr Giorgi DIDIDZE, Head of Department of Regional and Mountainous Areas Development, Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure, TBILISI

GERMANY / ALLEMAGNE

Ms Ruth GRUNE, Federal Ministry of the Interior, BERLIN

Mr Andre SCHMODE, Policy officer, Program management, Federal Ministry of the Interior, BERLIN

Ms Anna WASSENBERG, Representative of the German Länder, Ministry of the Interior and for Sport Rheinland-Pfalz, MAINZ

Ms Alexandra MESSERLE, Cheffe d'unité, Ministère de l'Intérieur, de la Construction et des Sports de Sarre

GREECE / GRECE

Mr Georgios CHRYSAFIS, Directorate of Organising and Functioning of Local Government, Ministry of the Interior, Athens

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Mr Andreas KIEFER, Secretary General / Secrétaire Général

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SECRETARIAT**Secretariat of the CDDG / Secrétariat du CDDG**

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Mr Christophe SPECKBACHER, Administrator – Democratic Governance Division / Directorate of Human Dignity, Equality and Governance / Directorate General of Democracy

Ms Judith ORLAND, Democratic Governance Division – Directorate of Human Dignity, Equality and Governance - Directorate General of Democracy

Ms Isabelle ETTER - Assistant

Other Secretariat participating in the meeting /Autre Secrétariat participant à la réunion

Ms Claudia LUCIANI, Director of Human Dignity, Equality and Governance / Directorate General of Democracy

Mr Daniel POPESCU, Head of Democracy and Governance Department / Directorate of Human Dignity, Equality and Governance / Directorate General of Democracy

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Interpreters / Interprètes

Ms Elisabetta BASSU

Ms Amanda BEDDOWS

Mr Nicolas GUITTONNEAU

Mr Michael HILL

APPENDIX 2**AGENDA****1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda**

For decision:	Documents
- Adoption of the agenda	CDDG(2021)0J2

2. Recent activities and developments

For information:	Documents
- Statement by the Chair - Information by the Secretariat - Report of the Bureau meeting	CDDG-Bu(2021)18
For discussion:	
- Exchange of views with Claudia Luciani, Director of Human Dignity, Equality and Governance	

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

For information:	Documents
- Progress of work	CDDG(2021)13

3.1 Democracy and technology

For information:	Documents
- Reports of the informal consultation and 5th meeting of the Working Group on democracy and technology	GT-DT(2021)2- Informal Consultation GT-DT(2021)5
- Information on the publication of the Study on the impact of digital transformation on democracy and good governance (link)	
For decision:	
- Approval of the draft guidelines (Specific task ii): Develop standards on new technologies in the different stages of the electoral process (including voter registration, transmission and tabulation of results, etc.) in the form of a Committee of Ministers' recommendation or guidelines	CDDG(2021)14

3.2 Democratic accountability

For information:	Documents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reports of the 4th and 5th meetings of the Working Group on accountability 	GT-RE(2021)4 GT-RE(2021)7
For decision:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Approval of a draft Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers on democratic accountability of elected officials and bodies at local and regional level (specific task ii); approval of the complementary Study on Accountability 	CDDG(2021)15 CDDG(2021)16

4. Promoting democratic governance through shared experience

For discussion:	Documents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exchange of views with Ms Romina Kuko, Deputy Minister of Interior, Albania - Exchange of views with Mr Ján Lazar, State Secretary, Ministry of Interior, Slovak Republic - Exchange of views with Mr Vache Terteryan, Deputy Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure, Armenia 	
For information and discussion:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presentation of current developments or ongoing reforms by members of the CDDG - State of signatures and ratifications of conventions under the responsibility of the CDDG; feedback from member States 	CDDG(2021)17

5. Terms of reference of the CDDG (2022-2025) and outlook of activities 2022

For information:	Documents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Terms of reference 2022-2025 	CDDG(2021)18
For decision:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workplan for 2022 - Creation of working groups, composition and terms of reference 	CDDG(2021)19 CDDG(2021)20

6. Activities of the Centre of Expertise for Good Governance ([CEGG](#))

For information:	Documents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CEGG Annual Report 2021 - CEGG Strategic Planning for 2022-2025 - Update on the European Label of Governance Excellence (ELoGE) 	CDDG(2021)21 CDDG(2021)22 CDDG(2021)23

7. Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers

For information:	Documents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Activities of the Presidency of Hungary (May-November 2021) - Priorities of the Presidency of Italy (November 2021-May 2022) - Preparation for other upcoming presidencies including the Icelandic Presidency (November 2022 – May 2023)] 	Conclusions of the Budapest Conference on Cross-Border Cooperation Information on presidencies

8. Activities of the Committee of Ministers and other Council of Europe bodies

For discussion:	Documents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exchange of views with Mr Leendert Verbeek, new Chair of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities - Exchange of views with Mr Gerhard Ermischer, Chair of the Conference of INGO 	CDDG(2021)24
<p>For decision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comments on Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 2212 (2021) "More participatory democracy to tackle climate change" 	CDDG(2021)30
<p>For information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Activities of the Committee of Ministers and other Council of Europe bodies: Secretariat - Information on the activities of the Division on elections and participatory democracy: Secretariat - Information on World Forum for Democracy (WFD): Secretariat - Information on the developments at the Ad hoc Committee on Artificial Intelligence (CAHAI): Mr Peter Andre, CDDG Rapporteur - Information from the rapporteurs on gender equality: Mr Edwin Lefebre and Ms Siobhan Smyth, CDDG - Information from Parliamentary Assembly 	CDDG(2021)25 CDDG(2021)26

9 Review on Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)5 on standards for e-voting

For discussion:	Documents
- Compilation of responses from member States and summary of trends	CDDG(2021)27 + Addendum

10. Elections of the Bureau of the CDDG for 2022

For information and discussion:	Documents
- Vacancies and modalities of voting; presentation of candidates	CDDG(2021)28 CDDG(2021)29
For decision:	
- Election of the chair and vice-chair (for 2022) and one member of the Bureau (2022-2023)	

11. Other business**12. Abridged meeting report; date of the next meeting; closure of meeting**

For decision:	Documents
- Adoption of the abridged meeting report	CDDG(2021)31

APPENDIX 3

Timetable for 2022		
COMMITTEE / WORKING GROUP	DATE	PLACE
Working Group on good democratic governance (GT-BG)	24-25 February	Strasbourg/videoconference
CDDG Bureau	24-25 March	Paris / videoconference
15th CDDG	21-22 April	Strasbourg / videoconference
Working Group on deliberative and participatory democracy (GT-DD)	5-6 May	Strasbourg/videoconference
Working Group on good democratic governance (GT-BG)	15-16 September (with additional on-line meeting in June, as necessary)	Strasbourg/videoconference
Working Group on deliberative and participatory democracy (GT-DD)	26-27 September (with additional on-line meeting in June, as necessary)	Strasbourg/videoconference
CDDG Bureau	13-14 October	Paris / videoconference
16th CDDG	28-29 November	Strasbourg / videoconference

APPENDIX 4**TERMS OF REFERENCE OF WORKING GROUPS*****Working Group on Principles of Good Democratic Governance
(GT-BG)*****Task**

Carry out preliminary work for the CDDG with a view to elaborate a *recommendation* [of the Committee of Ministers to member States] *on Principles of good democratic governance of general application to all levels of government, building on the 12 Principles of Good Democratic Governance at local level.* (specific task (i) of the terms of reference 2022-2025).

The working group is invited to use the acquis and documents produced so far in relation to the 12 Principles (including ELoGE, the benchmarks, the final country reports), and to complement it with considerations which are specific and particularly relevant for the national level, e.g. separation of powers, independence of the judiciary, national elections, taking into account the work of other Council of Europe bodies and standards already recognised.

Timeline: January 2022 to December 2022 (draft available for approval ideally at the 16th meeting of the CDDG). The working group may hold a meeting in March 2022 and in September 2022 (with the possibility of an extra meeting in the first half of 2023, if necessary). Written consultations are encouraged, and an additional on-line meeting may be organised in June 2022, as necessary.

Composition

All member States can nominate representatives and/or independent experts and participate in any of the working groups at their own expense. Institutions and bodies with the status of CDDG participant are also invited to nominate representatives in the working groups.

The Council of Europe will bear the costs for the participation of experts from the following 10 member States: **[to be completed once the list is available]**

Experts nominated should have adequate specialisation in the following areas: the functioning of central State institutions and of local and regional administrations including their cooperation; public administration reforms; Council of Europe standards in the field of democracy, human rights and the rule of law; constitutional jurisprudence; elections.

Background documents

The working group should take into account pertinent reports and documents produced under the aegis of the Council of Europe and other organisations, including:

- Those related to the 12 Principles of Good Democratic Governance at local level ([ELOGE benchmark](#) and [country reports](#))
- the Secretary General's periodic reports on the state of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law (see [here](#) and [here](#))
- the [Human Rights Commissioner](#),
- the Parliamentary Assembly (especially findings from the monitoring activities, the observance of elections, specific reports and recommendations of particular significance from the viewpoint of Democracy)
- the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (especially findings from [monitoring activities](#)),
- the Venice Commission, especially documents in the [Democratic Institutions and Studies](#) series
- [Commission for the Efficiency of Justice - CEPEJ](#) ; [Consultative Council of European Judges - CCJE](#); [Consultative Council of European Prosecutors - CCPE](#)
- the Group of States against Corruption: especially its work concerning the 3rd evaluation round (political financing), the 4th evaluation round (parliaments, the courts and public prosecution services) and the 5th evaluation round (central governments, law enforcement), summarised in the [annual reports](#)

Working methods

The working group may use on-line meetings and written consultations as necessary. It is encouraged to hold consultations with other bodies within and outside the Council of Europe (e.g. EU, OECD, OSCE) including non-governmental organisations. It may rely on contributions from expert consultants. See also Resolution CM/Res(2021)3 on intergovernmental committees and subordinate bodies, their terms of reference and working methods.

Working group on deliberative and participatory democracy (GT-DD)

Task

Carry out preliminary work for the CDDG with a view to prepare a *draft report for the CDDG on new forms of deliberative and participatory democracy with a view to complementing Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the participation of citizens in local public life, and taking into account Guidelines on civil participation in decision-making* (specific task (ii) of the terms of reference 2022-2025)

In addressing the task, the working group is invited to highlight examples and best practice of deliberative and participative democracy from all levels of government which have the potential of involving and mobilising citizens in deliberations, discussions, information, and accountability mechanisms through quality debates and work conducted for instance through citizens' assemblies, initiatives using the potential of information and communication technologies etc. It should also consider highlighting ways for exchanging information and the development of shared learning as well as further innovative approaches in these fields.

Timeline: January-December 2022 (draft for approval by the CDDG at its 16th meeting, November 2022). Given that the scope of the work is well defined and specific, the GT-DD shall finalise its work in two meetings to be held in 2022, tentatively in March and September; an additional on-line meeting may be organised in June.

Composition

All member States can nominate representatives and/or independent experts and participate in the working group at their own expense. Institutions and bodies with the status of CDDG participant are also invited to nominate representatives in the working groups. The Council of Europe will bear the costs for the participation of experts from the following 8 member States **[to be completed once the list is available]**.

Experts nominated should have adequate specialisation in the following areas: forms of deliberative and participative democracy at central or sub-national levels of government; the setting-up and/or management of such mechanisms including citizens' assemblies and e-democracy platforms; the organisation of deliberations / discussions / information networks based on events in-person or IT platforms; participatory processes in specific areas such as budgeting or urban planning etc.

In any event, the experts who have worked on the report prepared by the Division on elections and participatory democracy could also be invited to participate in the activity of the working group (e.g. one of these experts could be invited to at least present the report at the first meeting).

Background documents

The working group should take into account pertinent reports and documents produced under the aegis of the Council of Europe or by other organisations, including:

- Report on deliberative democracy, currently under preparation by the Division on elections and participatory democracy
- Report by the Congress on deliberative Democracy – should be published on 19 November
- Assembly Recommendation 2212 (2021) “More participatory democracy to tackle climate change”, adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly on 29 September 2021, and supporting report (Doc. 15351, rapporteur: Mr George Papandreou), see [here](#).
- [Study on the impact of digital transformation, including artificial intelligence and automated decision making, on democracy and governance](#), approved by the CDDG at its 13th meeting 15-16 April 2021
- [Handbook on e-democracy](#), approved by the CDDG at its 11th meeting 10-11 September 2020
- [Toolkit on civil participation in decision making \(April 2020\)](#)
- [Committee of Ministers’ recommendation \(2018\)4 on the participation of citizens in local public life](#)
- [2017 Committee of Ministers’ Guidelines on civil participation in decision-making](#) as well as [Civil participation in decision-making processes - An Overview of Standards and Practices in Council of Europe Member States \(May 2016\)](#)
- Proceedings from relevant editions of the [World Forum for Democracy](#), e.g. “Is democracy in danger in the information age?” (November 2019); “Re-wiring Democracy: connecting institutions and citizens in the digital age” (November 2013); “Can Democracy save the environment?” (2021)
- CDLR Report on [Participation of citizens in local public life \(2000\)](#)
- OECD: [Innovative Citizen Participation and New Democratic Institutions: Catching the Deliberative Wave](#) ; work on [Digital Government](#) and on [Open Government](#)
- EU: [European Democracy Action Plan](#)

Working methods

The working group may use on-line meetings and written consultations as necessary. It is encouraged to hold consultations with other bodies within and outside the Council of Europe, including non-governmental organisations. Given the specificities of the subject, the working group could actually use innovative approaches regarding the involvement of NGOs. It may also rely on contributions from expert consultants. See also Resolution CM/Res(2021)3 on intergovernmental committees and subordinate bodies, their terms of reference and working methods.

Working group on Green Public Administration (GT-AV)

Task

Carry out preliminary work for the CDDG with a view to elaborating a *draft report on green public administration aimed at collecting and disseminating good practice and case studies and identifying guidance for administrations at local, regional and national level, taking into account the proceedings of the 2020-2021 edition of the World Forum for Democracy and its previous work on digitalisation of the public administration* (specific task (iii) of the terms of reference 2022-2025 of the CDDG).

In addressing this task, the working group is invited to consider how public sector entities at national and sub-national levels directly address climate change, energy and sustainability challenges in their own activities and projects, including for the reduction of emissions and other pollutants, reduction in use of resources, promotion of efficient use of resources (including natural resources) including recycling and waste reduction, and how – more broadly - they can influence society and the economic sphere through their own policies and actions.

Timeline: end of 2022 - end of 2023 (draft for approval by the CDDG at its 18th meeting, November-December 2023). The working group could do some preliminary work in the end of 2022 possibly in writing/by videoconference and with a provisional Chairperson as need be, and hold two meetings in 2023 (periods to be determined).

Composition

All member States can nominate representatives and/or independent experts and participate in any of the working groups at their own expense. Institutions and bodies with the status of CDDG participant are also invited to nominate representatives in the working groups.

The Council of Europe will bear the costs for the participation of experts from the following 9 member States **[to be completed once the list is available]**

Experts nominated should have adequate specialisation in areas such as: governmental action and research (at national or regional/local level) in relation to the promotion of “green” working methods; academic work on green public administration; greening in relation to specific areas: human resource management, working methods, supplies and public procurement, infrastructure management; natural resource management (water supply etc.); the management of natural disasters and health crises; waste management; civil security and emergency action; good governance issues in relation to environmental matters; civil society action aimed at promoting green public administration.

Background documents

The working group should take into account pertinent reports and documents produced under the aegis of the Council of Europe or by other organisations, including:

- proceedings from the [2020-2021 edition of the World Forum for Democracy](#)
- CDDG: [study on the impact of the digital transformation, including artificial intelligence and automated decision-making, on democracy and good governance \(September 2021\)](#)
- Developments in relation to the activity of the European Court of Human Rights (see [here](#) and this [factsheet produced by DG1](#))
- Centre of Expertise: [green initiatives at local level – best practice from Ukraine](#)
- [Council of Europe Toolkit on Teleworking in Public Administration](#)
- [Proceedings from the Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Spatial/Regional Planning \(CEMAT\)](#)
- [European Public Sector Award \(EPSA\): work on Green Public Administration](#)
- OECD: [work on green public procurement](#)

Working methods

The working group may use on-line meetings and written consultations as necessary. It is encouraged to hold consultations with other bodies within and outside the Council of Europe including non-governmental organisations. It may rely on contributions from expert consultants. See also Resolution CM/Res(2021)3 on intergovernmental committees and subordinate bodies, their terms of reference and working methods.