



Strasbourg, 29 September 2015

CDDG-Bu(2015)21

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

MEETING REPORT¹

28 August 2015
Council of Europe, Strasbourg
Room G06

1. Opening of the meeting

The meeting was opened and chaired by Mr Paul-Henri Philips, Chair of the CDDG. 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 was informed that due to lack of time, the Rapporteur Group on Democracy (GR-DEM) of the Committee of Ministers did not discuss the abridged report of the CDDG's April 2015 meeting at its meeting on 7 July. Discussion of the report – including CDDG's proposals for the simplification of the procedure for awarding the European Label of Governance Excellence and the revised version of the Appendix to Protocol No. 3 to the Madrid Outline Convention – was postponed to the GR-DEM meeting of 8 September 2015.

The Bureau took note of the information and expressed the hope that the report be examined swiftly as CM's decisions were needed in order to give security to the countries implementing the Strategy or wishing to accede to it. The Secretariat was asked to closely follow the issue with a view to informing the CDDG in writing of any decision regarding the Strategy for Innovation and Good Governance.

¹ Prepared by the Secretariat and approved by the Chair.

4. Developing tools on good democratic governance and supporting reforms

4.1 *Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform*

- *Update on activities in 2015*

- *Annual Activity report 2014*

The Bureau took note of the activities in 2015 as set out in document CDDG-Bu(2015)13, including the new major project for the Ukraine on local governance reforms and the creation and operation of Regional Offices for Reform, as well as of the Annual Activity report 2014 (Document CELGR(2015)1rev2).

It also took note, in particular, of the proposal to replace the Advisory Board by regular high-level inter-Secretariat meetings. While it appreciated the importance of the Centre's work and the quality of the on-going cooperation with the Congress, it felt that the possible restructuring of the Advisory Board should be discussed in the context of the proposed independent evaluation of the Centre's activities and evolution in 2016 which it supported.

The Bureau asked the Secretariat to follow this issue and to report back as needed.

As regards the proposed evaluation, the Bureau considered that this should focus on strengthening and increasing the Centre's capacity for action and, underlining the significance of input by the CDDG and the Member States, that this would also constitute an appropriate occasion to further update a number of toolkits.

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

5.1 *CDDG Work Programme*

The Bureau took note of the report on the implementation of its work programme as outlined in document CDDG-Bu(2015)14. This document would be finalised for the CDDG meeting in December in view of reporting to the Committee of Ministers on the execution of its terms of reference for the 2014-2015 mandate.

The Bureau recalled the CDDG's decision that this report should be complemented by a specific report highlighting the impact of the CDDG's work in member states.

Item 5.2 *Compendium of Council of Europe texts in the area of democracy*

The Bureau examined the draft outline for the compendium and the proposals for its structure and format as set out in document CDDG-Bu(2015)15.

In the ensuing discussion, the following observations were made:

- the possibility of structuring chapters in way that better reflected the relationship between democratic society and democratic institutions;
- the absence of texts defining the concept of democracy;
- the need for the table of content to more clearly indicate issues covered;
- including, if possible, chapters on the essence of democratic legitimacy, legitimate limitations of fundamental rights and majority rule as well as texts on citizenship and democratic participation by non-citizens, common democratic principles concerning elections and voting and the role of constitutional courts;
- the possibility of including other types of texts such as those covering social rights.

The nature of the compendium as an 'open' and living library which was intended to present the most relevant text in the area of democracy was also raised. Members also felt that an introduction setting out its structure as well as a preface, possibly by the Secretary General, should also be foreseen.

The Secretariat was invited to address the advantages and disadvantages of publishing the compendium in electronic format.

The Bureau instructed the Secretariat to present an updated version of the compendium at its next meeting.

Item 5.3 *Thematic exchanges of information, views and good practices*

- Transfrontier co-operation

The Bureau took note of the state of preparations for the seminar on Democratic governance of Transfrontier territories on 22-23 October 2015 in Saint-Louis (France), in cooperation with the Regio Basiliensis and the Eurodistrict Trinational de Bâle (Switzerland). It approved the modalities for the Seminar as presented in Document CDDG-Bu(20145)10rev. and entrusted the organisation to the Secretariat.

- Promotion of inclusive societies

The Bureau took note of the information presented in Document CDDG-Bu(2015)16 and the three contributions received so far. It welcomed the Congress' suggestion to present its work relevant to this issue at the next CDDG meeting.

The Bureau asked the Secretariat to prepare an invitation to member States and other actors for contributions. The use of a questionnaire could be considered.

In order to facilitate in-depth exchanges on this issue at the CDDG meeting on 7-8 December, member states should be invited to include information such as, for example:

- activities being implemented at national and/or local level and detail on how these aim to promote inclusive societies;
- the type of framework legislative and/or administrative that has been or should be developed at national level to enable action at the local level;
- feed-back on experience on the basis of policies implemented, including case studies, the guidelines, best practices or toolkits being used and lessons learned from failures.

The Bureau considered that promoting inclusiveness should be seen in a broader sense and contributions should not exclusively focus on activities in the current context of combatting extremism and radicalisation.

It also recalled the request by the CDDG to present information on the No Hate Speech Campaign and the Intercultural Cities Programme at its next meeting. Participation of representatives of other Ministries, Council of Europe bodies and organisations should also be considered.

- Management of Metropolitan Areas and Urban Governance

The Bureau took note of the information as set out in document CDDG-Bu(2015) 20 and the possible hosting of the event by the City of Bari. It asked the Secretariat to issue a reminder, inviting members who had not yet submitted their responses to the questionnaire, to do so by 15 October.

A broad range of high-level representatives in the area of urban governance and metropolitan areas from Ministries, Metropolitan areas, the academic world, as well as from other Council of Europe bodies and organisations should present their experiences, best practices, case studies and lessons learned.

Initial conclusions should be presented to the CDDG in December for discussion. Subsequently, a document presenting guidelines or a toolkit could be prepared in cooperation with the Centre of Expertise to assist Member States in strengthening democratic institutions and processes and meeting citizens' expectations.

5.4 E-Democracy and E-Governance Workshops

The Bureau examined the information presented in Document CDDG-Bu(2015)17 and, having heard the proposals by the rapporteurs, decided that:

- participants who had not yet submitted a written contribution should be invited to do so before the end of October;
- the Secretariat, in cooperation with the rapporteurs, should prepare a synthesis emphasizing practical issues and guidelines for examination at the next CDDG meeting on 7-8 December 2015 ;

- the Secretariat should present modalities for editing and preparing the publication of the contributions and conclusions of the workshops, possibly as an E-document, at the December CDDG meeting.

At its next meeting, the CDDG should also consider the preparation of a new toolkit or guidelines outlining the fundamental principles to be taken into account in e-Democracy and e-Governance projects.

5.5 *Conventions under the responsibility of the CDDG*

The Bureau examined the updated information presented in Document CDDG-BU(2015)18 and Addendum and instructed the Secretariat to send the member States who had not yet submitted a reply a final reminder to submit their response by early October to allow updated information to be presented to the CDDG for examination at its December meeting.

This would allow the CDDG to identify relevant issues in relation to signature, ratification or declarations and reservations that should be brought to the attention of the Committee of Ministers as well as to decide on possible action, if any, at the level of Member States.

6. Preparation of the fourth meeting of the CDDG (7-8 December 2015)

The Bureau discussed the draft agenda and preparations for the CDDG's fourth meeting and arrangements for the thematic exchanges. The Secretariat was invited to start preparations and to forward relevant documentation to the national delegations at the earliest possible opportunity. This should clearly outline the contributions required from or questions to be answered by members.

The Bureau also pointed out the necessity to track and report concrete follow-up given by member States to issues discussed in the CDDG such as, for example, the involvement of member States in the reform process in Ukraine.

7. Information on the activities of other relevant bodies

The Bureau took note of the information set out in document CDDG-Bu(2015)19.

The Bureau took note of the invitations by Mr Vache Terteryan, First deputy Minister of Territorial Administration and Emergency Situations, to the Chairman and the Secretariat to attend the CORLEAP Conference on local democracy in the Eastern Partnership Countries on 18 September 2015 in Yerevan, Armenia. It agreed that Mr Philips could be presented by Mr. Balthasar should he be unable to attend.

8. Other business and date of the next meeting

The Bureau suggested 30 October or 6 November as possible dates for its next meeting. The final date would be set by the Bureau by electronic means following verification of possible constraints by the Secretariat.

APPENDIX I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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APPENDIX II

AGENDA

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Adoption of the agenda [CDDG-Bu(2015)OJ2 rev.]
3. Decisions of the Committee of Ministers of relevance to the work of the CDDG [CDDG-Bu(2015)12]
4. Developing tools on good democratic governance and supporting reforms
 - 4.1 *Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform*
 - Update on Activities in 2015; and [CDDG-Bu(2015)13]
 - Annual Activity Report 2014 [CELGR(2015)1rev2]
5. State of implementation of the CDDG activities according to its Terms of Reference
 - 5.1 *CDDG work programme (2014-2015)* [CDDG-Bu(2015)14]
 - 5.2 *Compendium of Council of Europe texts in the area of democracy* [CDDG-Bu(2015)15]
 - 5.3 *Thematic exchanges of information, views and good practices*
 - Transfrontier co-operation: seminar in Saint-Louis, Alsace (22-23 October 2015) [CDDG-Bu(2015)10 rev.]
 - Promotion of inclusive societies: responses by member States [CDDG-Bu(2015)16]
 - Management of Metropolitan Areas and Urban Governance [CDDG-Bu(2015)20]
 - 5.4 *E-Democracy and E-Governance*
 - Workshops organised by Belgium and Austria: reports and follow-up [CDDG-Bu(2015)17]
 - 5.5 *Conventions under the responsibility of the CDDG: responses by member States - Update* [CDDG-Bu(2015)18 + Addendum]
6. Preparation of the 4th meeting of the CDDG (7-8 December 2015) [CDDG(2015)OJ2prov.]
7. Information on the activities of other relevant bodies
 - Opportunities for strengthening cooperation [CDDG-Bu(2015)19]
8. Other business and date of the next meeting