



Strasbourg, 20 November 2014

CDDG-Bu(2014)18

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

MEETING REPORT¹

23 October 2014
Council of Europe Office, Paris
Room 1

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. Mr Paul Rowsell took part in the meeting by audio-conference.

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, since its last meeting in July, the Committee of Ministers had taken note of the abridged report of the 1st meeting of the CDDG (1204th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies, 2-3 July 2014) and of the 2013 annual activity report of the Centre of Expertise (1210th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies, 22 and 24 October 2014).

¹ Prepared by the Secretariat and approved by the Chair.

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

The Bureau took note of the information set out in the working document CDDG-Bu(2014)11 and discussed the following items in particular:

Item 2.1 (Thematic workshops): the Chair and Mr Balthasar confirmed that Belgium and Austria (in collaboration with Hungary) intended to hold thematic workshops in spring 2015 on e-voting and e-governance respectively and agreed that the two events should be linked. Proposals to this effect would be submitted at the CDDG December session. The Chair also suggested organising an event to coincide with the plenary meeting of the CDDG in spring 2015 to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the European Charter of Local Self-Government.

Item 2.2 (Rapid Reply Service): the Bureau reaffirmed the usefulness of the RRS, took note of the Secretariat's proposals concerning a more effective compilation and distribution of the replies received and considered it necessary that this tool remain easy and rapid to use both for states who requested information and for those who replied.

Item 4.2 (Supporting the Centre's activities): the Bureau was informed of the activities being carried out by the Centre and, given that the Centre was supported by the intergovernmental network when implementing its activities, it asked that the members of the CDDG be informed in due time of the activities planned or implemented by the Centre in their respective countries.

Item 6.1 (review of conventions under the responsibility of the CDDG): the Bureau discussed the appropriateness of addressing this subject, which was part of the CDDG's terms of reference, in 2015 and agreed to include it on the agenda of the CDDG. It instructed the Secretariat to prepare a short questionnaire to ask states which had not yet ratified or had expressed reservations with regard to the three relevant conventions, what the current situation was and what their intentions were for the future. It was suggested that states should also be asked about any of their supreme courts' case-law which referred to these conventions.

The Bureau also discussed the themes that it would be a good idea for the CDDG to highlight in 2015 and decided on the modernisation of public administration and e-governance. It also asked the Secretariat to prepare a document broadly identifying the subjects which had been priorities for the former CDLR and those which were current priorities for the CDDG on the basis of the discussions and the activities being carried out by and with member states.

Finally, the Bureau agreed to use rapporteurs again on certain issues such as human rights and their consequences for democracy and governance and the modernisation of public administration.

5. Exchanges of information, views and good practices

Territorial reforms in member states

The Bureau was informed of the outcome of the Conference and of the peer discussion on the subject of "Amalgamation of local authorities in Europe", which had taken place in Kiev, Ukraine, on 25 and 26 September 2014. The Ukrainian partners had made a very positive evaluation of these events and the Centre of Expertise and the CDDG would continue to support the Ukrainian Ministry of Regional Development throughout the implementation of envisaged reforms.

Cross-border co-operation

The Bureau was informed of the creation of the "EDEN" database, designed by the ISIG (Istituto di Sociologia Internazionale di Gorizia) and funded by the Council of Europe, whose objective is to gather information on cross-border co-operation and facilitate the establishment of a network of users. It agreed to propose to the CDDG that it appoint a rapporteur on issues relating to cross-border co-operation who would follow up and validate, where appropriate, fresh contributions to the database.

The Bureau took note of the state of preparations for the third regional seminar on the introduction of Protocol No. 3 to the Madrid Framework Convention, to be held in Belgrade before the end of the year.

6. Development of tools on good democratic governance

Strategy for Innovation and Good Governance at Local Level

The Bureau was informed of the outcome of the second meeting of the Working Group which would be submitted to the CDDG for discussion and approval so that the committee could prepare its report to the Committee of Ministers, in keeping with its ad hoc terms of reference. It noted that the meeting report would be revised to include a reference to the thematic workshops (proposal by Bulgaria) among the actions recommended in the conclusions on the Group's work.

Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform

The Bureau took note of the Centre's 2013 annual activity rapport and of the prospects for 2015 after the launching of a new large-scale programme (Eastern Partnership) following the latest agreement concluded between the Council of Europe and the European Commission.

7. Preparation of an opinion on a possible reference text on democracy to be submitted to the Committee of Ministers

The Bureau was informed of the outcome of the second meeting of the Working Group, which would be submitted to the CDDG for discussion and approval in December so that the committee could submit its opinion to the Committee of Ministers, in keeping with its terms of reference. The Bureau recommended that the Secretariat wait for the CDDG's final opinion and the official decision of the Committee of Ministers before beginning any preparatory work on a reference text/compilation of the most relevant texts in the field of democracy.

8. Information on the activities of other relevant bodies

The Bureau took note of the information set out in document CDDG-Bu(2014)17. The Chair informed the Bureau that he had taken part in the seminar on "Prospects for effective transfrontier co-operation in Europe" (Strasbourg, 16-17 September 2014) and in the 27th session of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (Strasbourg, 14-16 October 2014).

9. Preparation of the 2nd meeting of the CDDG (4-5 December 2014)

The Bureau discussed the subjects and arrangements for the thematic exchanges which were due to be held at the CDDG's second meeting. It was informed that leading political figures including Deputy Ministers from the United Kingdom and Slovenia would be attending and that the meeting would be addressed by the Belgian Ambassador and a Director General from Spain. The Bureau invited the Secretariat to make a start to the preparations and to inform the national delegations as soon as possible so that they had the time to prepare themselves and take an active part.

10. Other business and date of the next meeting

The Bureau would fix the date of its next meeting by consulting its members in writing in early 2015.

APPENDIX I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

CHAIRMAN / PRESIDENT

M. Paul-Henri PHILIPS, Chargé des Relations internationales, Bruxelles Pouvoirs Locaux, Service public régional de Bruxelles, Boulevard du Jardin Botanique, 20, B – 1035 BRUXELLES

Tel : (32) 2 800 32 77; Cel-phone: (32) 499 58 81 05; Fax : (32) 2 800 38 00;

E-mail : pphilips@sprb.irisnet.be

OTHER MEMBERS / AUTRES MEMBRES

Mr Alexander BALTHASAR, Head of the Institute for State Organization and Administrative Reform, Federal Chancellery of Austria, Ballhausplatz 1, A - 1014 WIEN

Tel: (43) 1 53115 202806 ; Fax: (43) 1 53109 202806;

E-mail: alexander.balthasar@bka.gv.at

Mrs Desislava DRAGOVA, Senior expert, Ministry of Regional Development, 17-19 St. Kiril I Metodii Str., 1202 SOFIA;

Tel : +(359) 2 9405 428 ; E-mail: ddragova@mrrb.government.bg

Mr Francesco GIUSTINO, Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, D.A.R. - Ufficio Attività Internazionali, ROMA

Tel. +39.06.6779.5130; E-mail: f.giustino@palazzochigi.it

Mr Paul ROWSELL, Deputy Director, Democracy, Department for Communities and Local Government, 2nd Floor Fry Building, 2 Marsham Street, Westminster, LONDON SW1P 4DF

Tel: (44) 303 44 42568; E-mail: Paul.Rowsell@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Ms Paqui SANTONJA, Special Adviser, Direction Générale pour la coordination de compétences régionales et locales, Ministère des Finances et de l'Administration Publique, MADRID

Tel: (34) 91 273 46 59; Fax: (34) 91 273 46 10; E-mail: paqui.santonja@seap.minhap.es

Mrs Greta Ulland BILLING, Senior International Adviser, Department for Local Government, Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation, Postbox 8112 DEP, N - 0032 OSLO

Tel: (47) 22 24 72 25; Mobile: (47) 92 61 37 27; Fax: (47) 22 24 27 35;

E-mail: greta.billing@Kmd.dep.no

SECRETARIAT

Mr Alfonso ZARDI, Head of Democratic Institutions and Governance Department / Chef du Service des institutions et de la gouvernance démocratiques - Directorate of Democratic Governance / Direction de la gouvernance démocratique, Directorate General of Democracy / Direction générale de la démocratie
Tel : +33 (0)3 88 41 39 06; Fax : +33 (0)3 88 41 27 84; E-mail : alfonso.zardi@coe.int

Ms Severina SPASSOVA, Senior project manager / Responsable principale de projets/
Directorate of Democratic Governance / Direction de la gouvernance démocratique,
Directorate General of Democracy / Direction générale de la démocratie
Tel: +33 (0)3 88 41 25 75; Fax: +33 (0)3 88 41 27 84;
E-mail: severina.spassova@coe.int

APPENDIX II

AGENDA

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Adoption of the agenda [CDDG-Bu(2014)OJ2rev.]
3. Decisions of the Committee of Ministers of relevance to the work of the CDDG [CDDG-Bu(2014)10]
4. State of implementation of the CDDG activities according to its Terms of Reference
 - CDDG work programme (2014-2015) [CDDG-Bu(2014)11]
 - Conference on Public service delivery in the context of human rights and good governance (Azerbaijan) [CDDG-Bu(2014)12]
 - Proposals of the Secretariat regarding the dissemination of the replies received following a Rapid Response Service [CDDG-Bu(2014)13]
5. Exchanges of information, views and good practices
 - 5.1 *Territorial reforms in member States*
 - High-Level Conference on Municipal consolidation in Europe (Ukraine) [CDDG-Bu(2014)14]
 - 5.2 *Participation of citizens in public life at all levels*
 - 5.3 *Relations and institutional dialogue between tiers of government*
 - 5.4 *Modernisation of public administration*
 - 5.5 *Transfrontier co-operation*
 - Third regional seminar on Protocol No. 3 to the Madrid Outline Convention (Serbia)
 - Introduction of the database EDEN – an online toolkit for cross border cooperation [CDDG-Bu(2014)15]

6. Development of tools on good democratic governance
- 6.1 *Strategy for Innovation and Good Governance at Local Level*
- Report of the 2nd meeting of the GT-GD (7 October 2014) [GT-GD(2014)6]
- 6.2 *Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform*
- Annual Activity report (2013) [CELGR(2014)1rev]
 - Up-date on activities [CDDG-Bu(2014)16]
7. Elaboration of an advice to the Committee of Ministers on a possible reference text on democracy
- Report of 2nd meeting of the GT-TD (6 October 2014) [GT-TD(2014)5]
8. Information on the activities of other relevant bodies [CDDG-Bu(2014)17]
9. Preparation of the 2nd meeting of the CDDG (4-5 December 2014) [CDDG(2014)OJ2 prov.]
10. Other business and date of the next meeting