



Strasbourg, 7 April 2015

CDDG-Bu(2015)8

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

MEETING REPORT¹

27 February 2015
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. Mrs Greta Ulland Billing had apologised for absence.

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 a lack of time, the Committee of Ministers had not discussed the abridged report of the CDDG's December 2014 meeting at its meeting of the Rapporteur Group on Democracy (GR-DEM) on 17 February. Discussion of the report, CDDG's opinion on the preparation of a reference text on Democracy and Report on the simplification of the procedures and promotion of the visibility of the Twelve principles, had been postponed to the GR-Dem meeting of 17 March 2015. The CDDG would be informed of the outcome of the discussion at its meeting on 16-17 April 2015.

The Bureau also received information on the possible setting up by the Committee of Ministers of an ad hoc committee of experts on updating Recommendation (2004)11 on legal, operational and technical standards for e-voting.

¹ Prepared by the Secretariat and approved by the Chair.

4. Developing tools on good democratic governance and supporting reforms

4.1 Strategy for Innovation and Good Governance at Local Level

Following the CDDG's report to the Committee of Ministers on the simplification of procedures for the Strategy for Innovation and Good Governance, the Bureau discussed potential follow-up measures for consideration by the CDDG at its April meeting subject to a formal decision by the Committee of Ministers.

Concerning the twelve principles, the Bureau underlined the significance of the principles and their continued implementation which materially supports good governance at all levels and contributes to strengthening democracy. Communication of the principles and the tools for their promotion should be reinforced.

As regards the strategy, Ms Dragova (Bulgaria) recalled the request by her authorities for renewal of the accreditation to allow the continued implementation of the strategy and label. The Bureau also took note of the interest in the strategy and the label expressed by Malta. It felt that it should be recognised that a number of States had invested resources in its implementation with positive results and that countries wishing to implement the principles and label should have the opportunity to do so.

Simplification of the accreditation mechanism would be advisable but some form of reward for successful implementation of the principles should be maintained. Given the institutional dimension of the "medium type" measures suggested by the CDDG the Bureau agreed that these should be discussed in the light of a decision to be taken by the Committee of Ministers.

4.2 Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform

The Bureau took note of the report on the Centre's activities and prospects for 2015 as set out in document CDDG-Bu(2015)3. The Secretariat informed the Bureau of additional requests that had been received for assistance on local democracy reforms as a follow-up to the peer review in Malta and for a peer review on the organic law on the organization and functioning of the Local Governance in Albania.

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 information set out in document CDDG-Bu(2015)4. Specific issues were discussed under the relevant items on the agenda of the meeting.

Item 5.2 (*Thematic exchanges of information*). Based on the themes identified by the CDDG, the Bureau examined topics and formats for exchanges of experience and best practice at the CDDG meeting on 16-17 April 2015. The Committee would hold exchanges on the basis of presentations by high-level representatives in the areas of *Urban governance and management of large metropolitan areas* and *Public administration and institutional reforms* with a view to strengthening democratic institutions and processes and meeting citizens' expectations.

At the following CDDG meeting a further exchange on deprived urban areas could be held. In view of the complexity of the issue participation of representatives of other Ministries, Council of Europe bodies and International Organisations should be considered.

The Bureau noted that, whenever possible, exchanges between the member States should give rise to concrete action including, for example, meetings on specific topics by "clusters" of states, peer-reviews or contributions to the guidelines and toolkits for the member States.

5.3 (*Workshops*). Following the presentation of additional information by the Chair and Mr Balthasar on the workshops to be organised respectively by Belgium and Austria (in collaboration with Hungary), the Secretariat was instructed to issue the relevant invitations to members. The Bureau decided that participants' travel and subsistence expenses would be reimbursed for one expert per member State whilst a report presenting the conclusions of both workshops to the CDDG should be considered. The Bureau further agreed that the rapporteurs should attend both workshops if possible.

5.4 (*Transfrontier co-operation*). The Bureau took note that a seminar on citizen participation in transfrontier governance was being considered instead of a third regional seminar on the introduction of Protocol No. 3 to the Madrid Outline Convention, originally scheduled for end 2014.

The Bureau also took note of the technical revisions underway to the appendix to Protocol No. 3 to the Madrid Outline Convention in light of Regulation (EU) No 1302/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 amending Regulation (EC) No 1082/2006 on a European grouping of territorial cooperation (EGTC). The revised text would be presented to the CDDG for approval at its April meeting.

6. Preparation of the third meeting of the CDDG (16-17 April 2015)

The Bureau discussed the draft agenda and preparations for the CDDG's third meeting and arrangements for the thematic exchanges. It was informed that leading political figures at ministerial level from Italy, Ukraine, Albania and Malta envisaged attending. 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 was informed of the responses to the questionnaire concerning the signature and ratification of the conventions under the responsibility of the Committee. It instructed the Secretariat to remind member States who had not yet submitted a reply of the need to do so. A synthesis of the replies would be presented at the next CDDG meeting.

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 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)7.

The Chair further informed the Bureau that he had attended the co-ordination meeting and certificate presentation ceremony of the European Local Democracy Week of the Congress in Paris.

8. Other business and date of the next meeting

The Bureau took note of the resignation from the Bureau by Ms Paqui Santonja as she was taking up new duties and instructed the Secretariat to include the election of a new Bureau member on the agenda of the April CDDG meeting.

The date of the next meeting of the Bureau would be fixed following the CDDG meeting on 16-17 April 2015.

APPENDIX I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

CHAIRMAN / PRESIDENT

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Apologised for absence / excusé

Mrs Greta Ulland BILLING, Senior International Adviser, Department for Local Government, Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation, apologised for absence.

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

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APPENDIX II

AGENDA

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Adoption of the agenda [CDDG-Bu(2015)OJ1]
3. Decisions of the Committee of Ministers of relevance to the work of the CDDG [CDDG-Bu(2015)1]
4. Developing tools on good democratic governance and supporting reforms
 - 4.1 *Strategy for Innovation and Good Governance at Local Level* [CDDG-Bu(2015)2]
 - 4.2 *Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform* [CDDG-Bu(2015)3]
 - Activities and prospects for 2015
5. State of Implementation of the CDDG activities according to its Terms of Reference
 - 5.1 *CDDG work programme (2014-2015)* [CDDG-Bu(2015)4]
 - 5.2 *Thematic exchanges of information, views and good practices* [CDDG-Bu(2015)5]
 - 5.3 *E-Democracy and E-Governance* [CDDG-Bu(2015)6]
 - Workshops organised by Belgium and Austria
 - 5.4 *Transfrontier co-operation*
6. Preparation of the 3rd meeting of the CDDG (16-17 April 2015) [CDDG(2015)OJ1prov]
7. Information on the activities of other relevant bodies [CDDG-Bu(2015)7]
8. Other business and date of the next meeting