

International Conference
**Multilevel Governance approaches
to address environmental challenges:**
Overcoming institutional silos and developing cross-sector collaboration.

13 June 2025

Conclusions

At their 134th Session Luxembourg 13-14 May 2025, building on commitments undertaken in the Reykjavík Declaration “United around our values”, the Committee of Ministers adopted a Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment. A key strategic objective of the Strategy is to foster the integration of good democratic governance principles in environmental governance.

This Conference organised under the Maltese Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, building on conclusions of the Lithuanian Presidency Conference in [Vilnius](#), gathered actors from all levels of governance to help identify critical factors to ensure effective multilevel governance collaboration in the development and implementation of policies related to environmental matters.

The Conference, organised with support from the Centre of Expertise for Multilevel Governance at the Congress and the active participation of members of the Council of Europe Committee on Democracy (CDDEM), welcomed the Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment and identified the following key points to strengthen multilevel governance collaboration:

- **Clarify** responsibility and accountability across levels of governance.
- Strengthen vertical and horizontal **coordination** between national, regional, and local authorities to ensure coherence in environmental policies and actions.
- Ensure that everyone has the **capacity to act** within their area of responsibility, fostering inclusive stakeholder engagement and effective participation in decision-making processes.

In order to give effect to these guidelines, the Conference recommended:

- International, supranational and multilateral cooperation to help frame a whole of society approach to environmental challenges, including the standard-setting work of the CDDEM.
- A robust legal framework to clarify roles and responsibilities across levels of government, recognising that climate governance must remain agile to deal with fast-evolving challenges.
- Pursue preparation of a draft additional protocol to the European Charter of Local Self-Government on environmental protection at the local level.
- Enhance capacity-building and technical support for subnational governments to address environmental regulations aligning local actions with national and international targets.
- Support innovation and pilot projects at the local level with mechanisms for scaling up successful initiatives through multilevel partnerships.
- Engage citizens and promote meaningful and effective public participation to help build trust in public administration and strengthen democratic responses to environmental challenges.
- The bottom-up foresight and top-down coordination enabled by Malta’s Phase 2 Climate Command, promoting openness and accountability, serves as an example of good practice.