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CDDEM(2024)8

## **STEERING COMMITTEE ON DEMOCRACY (CDDEM)**

### **MEETING REPORT**

1<sup>st</sup> Plenary Meeting  
(13–14 May 2024)

Strasbourg, Palais de l'Europe · Room 11  
(and online via Zoom)

Web: [www.coe.int/cddem](http://www.coe.int/cddem)

The Steering Committee on Democracy (CDDEM/the Committee) held its 1<sup>st</sup> plenary meeting in Strasbourg on 13-14 May 2024 with Mr **Matjaž Gruden**, Director for Democracy (Directorate General of Democracy and Human Dignity (DG II)), as acting Chair with the agreement of the Committee, pending the election of the CDDEM Chair. The plenary was held in hybrid format.

## 1. Opening of the meeting by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe

Ms **Marja Ruotanen**, Director General of Democracy and Human Dignity (DG II), opened the meeting.

Ms **Marija Pejčinović Burić**, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, welcomed the Committee members and commented on the CDDEM's formation. She pointed to her recent [annual reports](#), drawing members' attention to the increasingly concerning trend of democratic backsliding and the spread of authoritarianism around the world. She emphasised the rise in attacks on [fundamental freedoms](#) of expression, assembly, and association, as well as minority group rights and judicial independence, all against a backdrop of rising political polarisation and an increase in hate speech, both online and offline.

The Secretary General praised European leaders on their political will expressed at the [2023 Reykjavík Summit](#) of the Heads of State and Governments of the member States of the Council of Europe, and especially in the Reykjavík Principles for Democracy ([Appendix III to the Reykjavík Declaration](#)). She also praised member states' commitment to democracy demonstrated by their participation in the CDDEM. The Secretary General outlined the CDDEM's tasks, including operationalising the Reykjavík Principles, promoting participatory and deliberative democracy, engaging civil society, recognising civil society organisations, and assessing the potential impact of artificial intelligence on democracy. She reminded members of the Committee's broad [mandate](#), as well as the importance of taking a cohesive approach across all Council of Europe organs and bodies.

Mr **Domenik Wanger**, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative of Liechtenstein to the Council of Europe and President of the Ministers' Deputies, next addressed the CDDEM. In line with the priorities of Liechtenstein's presidency of the Committee of Ministers to deliver an effective follow-up on the Reykjavík Declaration and strengthen the values of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, Mr Wanger noted the contribution of the Committee of Ministers to the creation of the CDDEM and emphasised that the Committee should effectively follow up on the commitments made by member states at the Reykjavík Summit. He underlined the importance of achieving successful intergovernmental action while also assuring civil society engagement on democratic concerns, which mirrors the [Council of Europe's priority](#) of effective civil society engagement in the organisation's activities. Mr Wanger called on members to co-operate with other Council bodies to tackle issues in a structured manner, explaining that the role of the CDDEM lies in preparing the work of the Committee of Ministers in this regard.

## 2. Adoption of the agenda and order of business

The CDDEM adopted the meeting agenda (Appendix 1) without changes. The list of participants<sup>1</sup> appears in Appendix 2. The agenda, abridged and full report of the meeting are also available on the [CDDEM's website](#).

The Committee agreed a provisional arrangement for the Secretariat, represented by Mr. Gruden, to chair the meeting pending the election of CDDEM Chair at the second plenary meeting (see section 10.2).

## 3. Information by the Secretariat: The role of the CDDEM and its place in the Council of Europe

### 3.1. *Introduction of the Council of Europe's intergovernmental work*

Mr Gruden, acting Chair, provided an overview of the Council of Europe's new internal structure, informing the CDDEM about the reinforced [Directorate for Democracy](#) which brings together complementary vectors for strengthening European democratic societies – freedom of expression, meaningful participation of civil society and young persons in democratic life, educational programmes on human rights and democratic values, cultural heritage, etc. – to join the existing efforts on different

<sup>1</sup> At this 1<sup>st</sup> plenary meeting of the CDDEM, 39 attending member states were represented by 66 participants: of which 34 women and 32 men (51,5% and 48,5% respectively).

aspects of democracy and provide more direction to the overall work on this important topic.

The acting Chair pointed to the central position of the CDDEM in the Organisation's renewed effort on democracy, emphasising how its role is to link its different elements, especially in its work on the Parameters for the application and implementation of the [Reykjavík Principles](#) for Democracy, but also in contributing to the implementation of the wider Reykjavík agenda, including meaningful and fruitful engagement with civil society.

### **3.2. CDDEM Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure**

Ms **Urška Umek**, Secretary of the CDDEM, presented the Committee's [Terms of Reference](#) and the rules of procedure guiding its work, as set out in Committee of Ministers Resolution [CM/Res\(2021\)3](#) on intergovernmental committees and subordinate bodies, their terms of reference and working methods. She also introduced the proposal for the CDDEM to create two working groups in which to accomplish the tasks set out for this biennium, namely on the parameters for the application and implementation of the Reykjavík Principles (GT-P) and on civil society participation (GT-CS) (see section 10.1).<sup>2</sup>

The Secretary pointed to the links between the Council of Europe's three [fundamental values](#) – democracy, human rights, and the rule of law – to be considered for most tasks of the Committee. She noted that for the CDDEM, democracy is of particular importance; however, in several Committee's tasks, all three dimensions will be intertwined and operate as a unified system. The Secretary also informed the members that the Council of Europe's Democratic Institutions and Civil Society Division, which provides Secretariat to the CDDEM, also provides support to two other democracy-focussed entities, namely the Conference of International Non-Governmental Organisations ([CINGO](#)) and the World Forum for Democracy ([WFD](#)), which should facilitate the developing of synergies between the interconnected structures.

### **3.3. Tour de table of the CDDEM members**

Committee members introduced themselves and discussed their governments' priorities as well as their expectations for CDDEM's future work and activities. Among the top priorities were support for free and fair elections, the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) and digitalisation on democracy and democratic governance, effective and meaningful civil society engagement in the work of respective governments, with many members expressing interest in developments on participatory democracy specifically, and issues of good governance across all levels of government, including developments concerning multilevel governance. Some members expressed a specific interest in more focussed issues such as anticorruption measures, electoral reform, the relationship between democracy and the economy, and management of state capacity, including the functioning of the administration and economic progress. Many of the members pointed to the prospective role of the CDDEM as a forum for the exchange of views and especially best practices on these and related issues. They also emphasised the need to ensure that the CDDEM does not unduly duplicate existing efforts and that the Committee should not lose sight of the vast number of existing standards.

Ms **Jurgita Germanavičienė**, Ambassador at Large for Democracy Promotion, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Committee member for Lithuania, also presented the priorities of the upcoming [Lithuanian presidency of the Committee of Ministers](#). She highlighted support for Ukraine, especially concerning the strengthening of democracy, democratic reconstruction, and the ensuring of international accountability of the aggressor.

## **4. Challenges for democracy in Europe**

### **4.1. Findings from reports of the Secretary General on the State of Democracy, Human Rights and the Rule of Law**

The acting Chair highlighted the challenges for democracy set out in recent Secretary General's [annual reports](#) on the State of Democracy, Human Rights and the Rule of Law, emphasising that the reports' findings contributed to the establishment of the CDDEM and the strengthening of the Organisation's democracy efforts in general. He stressed that the reports are based on the findings of various Council bodies and structures (e.g., the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice

<sup>2</sup> Prior to the meeting, members of the Committee were provided with the Draft Terms of Reference for both the GT-P ([CDDEM\(2024\)6](#)) and the GT-CS ([CDDEM\(2024\)7](#)).

Commission), the Parliamentary Assembly (PACE), and the Commissioner for Human Rights) and provide a comprehensive picture of the state of affairs in member states. The reports focus on different pillars of democracy and democratic security, with findings based on specific measurement criteria developed on the basis of Council of Europe standards. This can provide a solid foundation for developing Parameters for the application and implementation of the Reykjavík Principles. The acting Chair however encouraged CDDEM members to look beyond the current measurement criteria when operationalising the Reykjavík Principles for Democracy.

With the war in Ukraine highlighting the threats and possible vulnerabilities that European states face, the acting Chair reflected on some contemporary challenges affecting European democracies in light of such phenomena as “populism”.<sup>3</sup> Referring to a [series of academic articles](#) co-authored by one of the invited guest speakers, Mr Roberto Foa, Mr Gruden pondered on the growing popular dissatisfaction with liberal-democratic values in Europe. He cited the Secretary General’s [2021 report](#), which introduced the notion of “democratic backsliding” into the Council’s lexicon and agenda and emphasised the concerning “mutually reinforcing decline” in democratic institutions and the democratic environment.

#### **4.2. Presentation of contemporary challenges facing European democracies and the relevant case-law of the European Court of Human Rights**

Mr **Erik Wennerström**, judge at the [European Court of Human Rights](#) (ECtHR/the Court) in respect of Sweden, stated that the Court, despite not having a “democracy mandate” under the [European Convention for Human Rights](#) (ECHR/the Convention), protects democracy in Europe through the interpretation of the Convention and the individual rights mentioned therein. According to Judge Wennerström, the Court’s case-law focuses in particular on four aspects or interdependences of democracy, which are realised through the observance of human rights and the rule of law: (1) freedom of expression ([Art. 10 ECHR](#)); (2) freedom of assembly and association ([Art. 11 ECHR](#)); (3) central electoral rights ([Art. 3, Prot. 1 ECHR](#)); and (4) judicial independence ([Art. 6 ECHR](#)).

Judge Wennerström reminded members of the Court’s repeated [pronouncement](#) that democracy appears to be the only political model contemplated by the Convention and thus the only one compatible with it. The judge took the view that the Reykjavík Principles are a good starting point for defining and describing democracy – which is a necessary step in protecting it – and noted significant convergence in the development of the ECtHR’s case-law, the [opinions and studies](#) of the Venice Commission, and the Reykjavík Principles.

Mr **Roberto S. Foa**, Co-Director of the Cambridge Centre for the Future of Democracy, focused on the contemporary challenges for democracy as observed in practitioner research, and presented existing indicators designed to assess the various dimensions of democratic performance, such as the [V-Dem](#) Institute’s indices, [Freedom House](#)’s, the [Economist Intelligence Unit](#)’s Democracy Index, and [International IDEA](#). According to Mr Foa, existing indicator projects are increasingly global in scope, with an emphasis on individual democratic standards and the inclusion of experience and skills from many sectors (such as media/journalism and the non-governmental sector). He also mentioned that there is a trend to consider citizens’ experiences rather than only expert assessment (which should follow a rigorous process to ensure objectivity).

In Mr Foa’s view, the potential added value of a Council of Europe set of indicators or parameters resides in the creation of actionable, policy- and legal-specific indicators. It is critical to gather reliable data on how long civil society participation projects actually take to take effect, what limits apply, and how they are dealt with. The metrics should also be based on informal standards, as democratic degradation occurs in more subtle and informal ways today. Mr Foa provided some general guidance on how to develop the parameters, including focusing on democratic backsliding while not losing sight of progress and successes in democratic resilience and consolidation; remaining aware of the specific scope of operation and considering the unique added value potential (e.g., specific legal review of norms); and remembering to define goals ahead of time and incentivise policy change.

Following the interventions, the Committee exchanged views with the guest speakers. When asked about the execution of Court decisions/judgments, Judge Wennerström agreed that there had been some new developments, but stated that the Court does not, in principle, actively supervise implementation because the Committee of Ministers is already responsible for doing so. Mr Foa was asked about his thoughts on the necessity for increased codification of unwritten principles in light of

<sup>3</sup> Relying on the definition of populism that was devised, in the [2017 annual report](#) (see esp. p. 6) of the Secretary General, for the purposes of the work of the Council of Europe.

recent unfavourable developments involving historically recognised informal standards. According to Mr Foa, the Council should focus its attention on less contentious issues and contribute through more real and effective legal-political instruments. On the development of the Parameters for the application and implementation of the Reykjavik Principles (see section 5), furthermore, Mr Foa opined that a general development from qualitative to quantitative data might prove impactful.

## **5. Reykjavik Principles for Democracy and the parameters to facilitate their application and implementation**

The discussion among CDDEM members on the operationalisation of the Reykjavik Principles for Democracy through the development of Parameters (see section 5.4) was introduced by presentations of relevant work already (being) undertaken under the Council of Europe's auspices.

### **5.1. Introduction of the aims pursued by the operationalisation of the Reykjavik Principles for Democracy**

Ms **Marja Ruotanen** outlined the [Reykjavik Principles for Democracy](#) and the CDDEM's task of developing Parameters to facilitate their application and implementation. Ms. Ruotanen emphasised the importance of the CDDEM playing a key role in future-proofing democracy in Europe. The CDDEM will feed its work into the Committee of Ministers' ongoing follow-up activities regarding the decisions and commitments made in the Reykjavik Declaration. Ms. Ruotanen mentioned ongoing and planned work on aspects of democracy (such as education, culture, minority rights, and mainstreaming the youth perspective across the Organisation's activities) carried out by the Council's Directorate General of Democracy and Human Dignity, or [DG II](#). This work will complement that of CDDEM and, in a sense, need to be bundled through the latter's efforts.

### **5.2. Relevant work of the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission)**

Ms **Claire Bazy-Malaurie**, President of the [Venice Commission](#), gave a brief overview of the Commission's mission, background, working methods, and added value. She emphasised the body's interpretation of the complex [relationship](#) between democracy, the [rule of law](#) and human rights, which broadly reflect the three pillars of the Council of Europe. In this regard, she stressed the need to include all relevant structures of the Council in the renewed effort on democracy, to ensure consistent action across the board.

Ms Bazy-Malaurie evoked newer threats to democratic security in Europe, which need to be addressed through a comprehensive strategy involving both legal parameters and those relating to practice. She stated that European values need to evolve without losing sight of their foundations and objectives in order to meet the demands of the modern world. In this perspective, the rule of law must act as a guarantor of and for democratic society. Since formal guarantees are insufficient, it is [necessary](#) that all societal sectors actively participate and make a "conscious choice for democracy". Stated differently, democratic institutions require a democratic environment and culture as their backdrop.

### **5.3. Relevant work of the [Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe](#)**

Mr **George Papandreou**, PACE General Rapporteur on Democracy and Second Vice-Chairperson of PACE's [Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy](#) (Greece, SOC), stressed the need of making the amount of data and information on democracy available and accessible to policy-makers, civil society actors, and citizens in general. He also emphasised the importance of keeping ease of use in mind when creating toolkits and checklists for citizens and lawmakers to check the evolution of our democracies.<sup>4</sup> In this sense, Mr Papandreou mentioned the Council of Europe as a possible focal point for the development of a network that may bring together research, legislation, standard-setting, monitoring, and assessment.

Mr Papandreou also stressed that [genuine democracy](#) is not simply the result of laws and institutions, but an expression of a civic culture and spirit. In order to protect it, both the institutions and practices need to evolve to be able to deal with challenges such as [artificial intelligence](#), [climate change](#), populism and authoritarianism. The PACE is equally discussing<sup>5</sup> the evolution and role of political parties in

<sup>4</sup> See the PACE Report on the follow-up of the Reykjavik Summit ([Doc. 15681](#) (2023)).

<sup>5</sup> See the relevant reports currently under preparation by PACE committees ([AS/Inf\(2024\)06](#)).

democracies, the relationship between democracy and money, including concerns about wealth inequality and oligarchisation, the impact of [religious identities](#), of “woke culture” and “identity politics”, and of foreign politics on democratic institutions and policies. Lastly, Mr. Papandreou emphasised that while tackling these issues, it is important to keep in mind new models of [participatory and deliberative](#) democracy, because involving the public in decision-making processes – that is, at all levels of governance – should be a top priority, as the Reykjavík agenda demonstrates.<sup>6</sup>

Ms **Marie-Hélène Boulanger**, Deputy Director and Head of Unit in charge of Democracy, Citizenship and Free Movement at the European Commission (Directorate for Rule of Law, Fundamental Rights and Democracy, Directorate General for Justice and Consumers (DG JUST)) reflected on the European Union’s initiatives and instruments on democracy, especially the 2023 [Defence of Democracy Package](#) which includes a [Proposal for a Directive](#) on transparency of interest representation carried out on behalf of third countries, a [Recommendation](#) on inclusive and resilient electoral processes, and a [Recommendation](#) on promoting the engagement and effective participation of citizens and civil society organisation in public policy-making processes. The package builds on the [European Democracy Action Plan](#), with its three priorities of countering disinformation and foreign interference and information influence, protecting the integrity of elections while promoting democratic participation, and strengthening media freedom and pluralism. Ms Boulanger emphasised the European Commission’s renewed push for European democracy, mentioning for example the [Conference on the Future of Europe](#), as well as the apparent synergies between the Council’s and the European Union’s work on complementary tools to support European representative democracy and promote democratic resilience.

After the presentations, members exchanged views with the panellists. One Committee member stated that rather than considering specific approaches, the emphasis should be on establishing clear and concrete written goals and guidance in order to address the shared challenges in a more methodical manner. While discussing specific ideas for the internal democracy in political parties’ structure, Mr Papandreou stated that a PACE report on political parties was planned and that, generally speaking, the Reykjavík Principles could be operationalised “in the details and not in the form”.

#### **5.4. Brainstorming on the objectives and format of the parameters and related workplan**

During a break-out session, CDDEM members were divided into five groups and asked to reflect on the information contained in the Background Note that was provided beforehand ([CDDEM\(2024\)1](#)). They presented their opinions on the major concerns in areas addressed by the Reykjavík Principles and discussed the possible objectives, format and content of the future Parameters for the application and implementation of the Principles. Some members stressed that the Parameters should be a living, evolving document and should include a mix of evidence-based criteria and easily understandable messages. They should be regarded as minimal standards, and it would be useful for them to include obligations to measure/evaluate, in order to give practical meaning to a conceptual document. Secretariat members of the Parliamentary Assembly ([PACE](#)), the Venice Commission, Group of States against Corruption ([GRECO](#)), Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism ([MONEYVAL](#)), European Committee on Crime Problems ([CDPC](#)), [Youth policy](#) Division, Steering Committee on Anti-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion ([CDADI](#)) and Steering Committee on Media and Information Society ([CDMSI](#)) presented the standards applicable to different sectors which could be useful for the development of the Parameters.

The group discussing **participatory democracy and civil society** discussed the Council of Europe’s existing work on participatory and deliberative democracy, agreeing that the concrete elements included in the relevant Committee of Ministers’ recommendations are a good basis for drafting the parameters relating to civil society and civil participation. It was stressed that there should be proactive outreach to civil society organisations, including youth organisations, so that they are informed about the process of developing the parameters and how they can contribute to the work. Considering various levels of civil society participation across member states, it would be useful to define a minimum level of such participation that is necessary in democratic societies. In this connection, work on two levels is needed; there need to be mechanisms for participation put in place, but there also needs to be the right mentality on the part of both state institutions and citizens themselves.

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<sup>6</sup> See now also the Report on Multilevel Governance ([CDDG\(2023\)12](#)) prepared, in the wake of the Reykjavík Summit in 2023, by the CDDEM’s predecessor, the European Committee on Democracy and Governance (CDDG), as well as the earlier [CDDG Report](#) on Deliberative Democracy.

The group discussing **free and fair elections** also proceeded from the conclusion that the Council of Europe has several relevant standards to be used in the elaboration of the Parameters, but individual members also warned about matters like the polarisation of election campaigns and outcomes, the spread of disinformation (including through foreign interference) affecting electoral processes, the potential misuse of referendums, etc. Likewise, the Parameters ought to include noteworthy trends and best practices, such as young people observing elections. It was underlined that the electoral cycle should be viewed as the central component of the comprehensive evaluation of democracy and that the Parameters should represent a holistic approach to the electoral cycle and democracy. Regarding format, a comprehensive approach was recommended, accessibility was highlighted, and it was determined that there was no need to duplicate other methods and indices already in place.

The group discussing **democratic institutions and separation of powers** echoed the opinion of other groups that the existing Council of Europe standards and criteria applied in the Secretary General's annual reports were relevant and might be reorganised and revised to better serve the Parameters. These ought to form a sort of "model code" for democracy, one that may be incorporated into national laws to serve as a guide for any (self-)evaluations. A self-evaluation or participatory discussion in member states might be guided by a tool akin to the Venice Commission's [Rule of Law checklist](#). In this context, it was considered useful to prepare a discussion guide for assessing the state of democracy, with valuable practices which could be used for self-assessment within member states. Some members also suggested that indications of "first signs of backsliding" or "tipping points" should be included, with examples of tools to deal with the negative developments.

The group discussing **integrity and fight against corruption and organised crime** took the view that the principle "government of the people, by the people, for the people" can best accommodate considerations pertaining to the control of corruption and organised crime (as well as other Reykjavík principles). This is because the principle implies the pursuit of the common good and the general interest, which can be linked to other important principles like accountability, transparency, and integrity. Also, the members agreed that member states at all government levels are concerned by the Reykjavík Principles, as well as academics, media, civil society and the public. Because of privatisations, outsourcing, commission and public private partnerships, private institutions may be responsible for certain State and/or local authority functions, as well as delivery of public services. They should accordingly also comply with the Principles and the future Parameters. The right level of complexity will need to be achieved for the broader public to understand what it is entitled to expect from the institutions/decision-makers, as well as to allow it to participate in the scrutiny.

The group discussing **freedom of expression and media freedom** reflected on the challenges posed by AI and the online environment for parameters that seem to reflect assumptions of an offline reality. They further exchanged views on the balance to be struck between media freedom and freedom of expression and the need for regulation; the related issue of trust and the spread of mis- and dis-information; and the CDDEM's potential added value on the issues at hand, given existing frameworks and standards.

## **6. Freedom of association, shrinking civic space and meaningful participation in public life**

The acting Chair described the three tasks relating to civil society and civic participation that the Committee was entrusted to accomplish in the biennium 2024-2025, namely an update of Committee of Ministers Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2007\)14](#) on the legal status of non-governmental organisations; a contribution to the implementation review report on Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2018\)11](#) on the need to strengthen the protection and promotion of civil society space in Europe (to be prepared by the Steering Committee on Human Rights (CDDH)), and a Guidance Note on civil society participation in the Council of Europe's work.

### **6.1. Update of Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)14 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the legal status of non-governmental organisations in Europe and presentation of CINGO's Expert Council on NGO Law**

Mr **Jeremy McBride**, President of CINGO's [Expert Council on NGO Law](#) and lecturer in human rights, public international law and public law, presented a background document on the updating of Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2007\)14](#)<sup>7</sup> setting out some potential issues to be considered in the new document. Mr. McBride addressed the increasingly unfavourable conditions that non-governmental organisations face in terms of finance, legal standing, and public acceptability of their work (e.g., stigmatisation, unwarranted scrutiny, and SLAPPs<sup>8</sup>). He also addressed the lack of implementation of Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)14, stating that many civil society organisations were unaware of its existence. Along with highlighting the issues concerning lobbying, Mr McBride questioned whether non-profit organisations should be subject to the same regulations as for-profit ones. He went on to discuss the problem of transparency, pointing out that the new instrument should address the lack of clarity on this matter in the current recommendation. Lastly, Mr McBride considered that the revised document should take a closer look at the phenomenon of online activity, which gained importance following the elaboration of the existing Recommendation.

The following exchange with CDDEM members raised several issues related to non-governmental organisations' financing. Mr McBride voiced some scepticism about the concept of "beneficial owners declarations" and whether it was appropriate for non-governmental organisations. Regarding possible over-regulation of funding and potentially disproportionate transparency requirements, Mr McBride evoked the delicate balance that needs to be struck between States' prerogative to require a certain level of transparency and non-governmental organisations' legitimate interest in meaningful and effective participation. Furthermore, Mr. McBride believed that additional work is required in this area because ramifications have not yet been fully examined in relation to the need for transparency.

Given that the European Committee on Legal Co-Operation ([CDCJ](#)) was tasked with preparing the original Recommendation, the CDDEM agreed to seek input from the committee in the process of updating Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)14.

### **6.2. Relevant work of the Department for the Execution of Judgments of the European Court of Human Rights**

Ms **Yasmine Cag**, Head of Section at the Department for the [Execution of Judgments](#) of the ECtHR,<sup>9</sup> outlined the department's work on Article 46 of the Convention as well as recent violations of Article 11 which guarantees the freedom of assembly and association, especially regarding protests and demonstrations and restrictions of freedom to create and participate in associations. Ms Cag outlined the execution measures that were indicated to remedy the violations and detailed how those measures were, or were not, implemented, giving positive and negative examples concerning individual cases.

## **7. Enhancing civil society participation in the work of the Council of Europe**

The acting Chair informed CDDEM members about a number of steps that the Council of Europe has made to improve its engagement with civil society organisations and actors. These initiatives were to implement the Committee of Minister's decisions adopted in Helsinki and Turin (known as the "Helsinki Process"), the Reykjavík Declaration and the Secretary General's [Roadmap on civil society engagement with the Council of Europe](#). In addition to providing an intergovernmental perspective on the execution of the aforementioned decisions and the pertinent part of the Reykjavík agenda, the CDDEM was invited to appropriately consider the viewpoints of civil society actors in its own work.

<sup>7</sup> Some Issues for Consideration when Updating Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)14 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on the Legal Status of Non-Governmental Organisations in Europe ([CDDEM\(2024\)2](#)).

<sup>8</sup> See now Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2024\)2](#) of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on Countering the Use of Strategic Lawsuits against Public Participation (SLAPPs).

<sup>9</sup> See also the Committee of Ministers [annual reports](#) on the supervision of the execution of judgments.



The CDDEM discussed the task of contributing to the implementation review report on Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2018\)11](#) on the need to strengthen the protection and promotion of civil society space in Europe assigned to the Steering Committee on Human Rights (CDDH).<sup>10</sup> Ms **Krista Oinonen**, Chair of the CDDH, Director of the Unit for Human Rights Courts and Conventions (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finland) and Agent of the Finnish Government before the ECtHR, presented the work of the CDDH and informed CDDEM members that the CDDH would hold its 100<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting in [Helsinki](#), on [24-25 June 2024](#). The meeting will host an event dedicated to examination of the implementation of Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)11, which is to provide the basis for the report that the CDDH is expected to adopt at its meeting in November 2024. Drawing on her experience in the CDDH, Ms Oinonen encouraged CDDEM members to be transparent towards civil society actors in their work, which is key in bringing these actors on board. Regarding specific concerns for civil society, Ms Oinonen highlighted the mounting issues of violent speech and hate crime, particularly when it comes to targeting minority groups.

During the subsequent discussion with CDDEM members, some pointed out that activists supporting causes such as women's rights and minorities are facing more and more opposition. One member reflected on the situation in their country, stating that their government considers this development as an element of democratic backsliding, and that this concern could be tackled jointly through co-operation between CDDEM and the CDDH. Ms Oinonen underlined the alarming state of affairs in Europe as following from several reports as well as the changing character of cases brought before the ECtHR. She invited the Committee members to acknowledge the often still very vulnerable positions of human rights defenders, and to use the Court's case-law as a guide when it comes to instances of democratic backsliding.

### **7.1. Current practice of civil society engagement in the Council of Europe**

Ms **Margo (Marharyta) Vorykhava**, Vice-Chair of the Council of Europe's Advisory Council on Youth (CCJ) presented the work of the CCJ and the way in which it co-operates with the Council of Europe. She stressed the importance of engaging youth in decision-making at all levels. According to Ms Vorykhava, this not only builds trust and transparency, but contributes towards the tackling of the current wave of voter disaffection and disillusionment with democracy that is especially prominent amongst youth. Lastly, Ms Vorykhava highlighted the need for communication and for the Organisation to engage with civil society actors in ways that are accessible and understandable to them.

Ms **Sofia Calabrese**, Digital Policy Manager at European Partnership for Democracy (EPD), CINGO participant in the CDDEM, presented the work of the EPD. She emphasised the significance of raising awareness of the Council of Europe's work in general as well as the CDDEM in particular. This would improve the involvement of civic society. Ms Calabrese went on to emphasise the importance of accessibility and transparency in order for members of civil society to understand how they may become involved and contribute to the Organisation's activities. Finally, it is important to ensure that civil society actors' involvement is meaningful and produces tangible outcomes. Ms Calabrese proposed that involving civil society actors in the CDDEM Working Groups would be one approach to engage them in a meaningful way.

Mr **Danijel Kalezić**, Executive Co-Director of the [ERA-LGBTI](#) Equal Rights Association, gave a presentation about the association's involvement in the Council of Europe's activities. ERA engages in direct intergovernmental activities within the Council's specific sector of activity rather than being a member of CINGO, which serves as an institutional point of access for civil society actors and organisations into the Council's work. Mr Kalezić gave a brief overview of ERA's activities and discussed the harsh and increasingly anti-democratic conditions for the operation of many civil society organisations. These conditions include unstable financial circumstances, an increasingly unsupportive and chaotic political climate, and difficulties in the working environment of civil society. According to Mr Kalezić, in order for there to be any meaningful participation, there needs to be consideration given to the reality faced by organisations similar to his own when considering cooperation between civil society actors and the Council of Europe.

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<sup>10</sup> In terms of the timeline for the CDDEM contribution, a draft report will be prepared following the CDDH Conference on the Protection and the Promotion of Civil Society Space in Europe which is taking place during the CDDH's 100<sup>th</sup> meeting. The CDDEM is to provide a contribution to the draft report, to be adopted at the CDDH's 101<sup>st</sup> plenary meeting in November 2024.

## **7.2. Draft guidance note on enhancing civil society participation in Council of Europe work**

The acting Chair informed the CDDEM about its task of preparing a Guidance Note on civil society participation in Council of Europe work<sup>11</sup>. The document is to be finalised at the committee's second plenary meeting. This guidance note is to contribute to the implementation of the Committee of Minister's decisions adopted in Helsinki and Turin (known as the "Helsinki Process"), the Reykjavik Declaration and the Secretary General's [Roadmap on civil society engagement with the Council of Europe](#). The purpose of the note is to lay out the general framework for the Organisation's meaningful involvement with civil society. It is to contain high-level principles that will be further operationalised through the two other documents outlined in the Roadmap.

The recommendations made in the guidance note are to guide the development of a Code of Conduct, which is to outline the modalities of civil society engagement with the Council and participation in the Organisation's work, defining the roles and responsibilities of both the Organisation and civil society. Yet another document, practical guidelines, is to build on good practices and answer the many questions of "how" civil society can engage with the Organisation, giving different options and scenarios and remaining sufficiently flexible to fit the different Council and civil society structures.

In order to develop the Guidance Note, the Secretariat had prepared a list of questions, and the CDDEM and the guest speakers exchanged opinions on them. Some members emphasised the necessity of having closer dialogue with civil society actors, which would strengthen the opportunities for collaboration. Mr McBride listed the challenges that non-governmental organisations encounter when attempting to interact with Council of Europe's structures, noting that the CDDEM may be the appropriate forum to develop strategies for overcoming those challenges and facilitating co-operation. A few members discussed how their own countries' current circumstances aligned with the accounts provided by the guest speakers. Members also considered their own potential role as facilitators in exchanges with civil society and discussed the necessity of developing strategies that avoid forcing a one-size-fits-all approach on the aforementioned challenges.

## **8. The role of artificial intelligence in public debate relating to democratic processes**

### ***Study on the use of AI in public debate***

The CDDEM discussed the task of preparing a study on advantages and risks of the use of AI in public debate relating to democratic processes and on AI literacy for democratic life. The CDDEM Secretary briefly presented the Organisation's relevant work. Mr **Mario Hernández Ramos**, Professor of Constitutional Law at Complutense University of Madrid, Head of the Spanish delegation to and Bureau member of the Committee on Artificial Intelligence (CAI) presented the elaboration of the Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence, and Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law ([CETS No. \[225\] \(2024\)](#))<sup>12</sup> and pointed to the current gaps in AI related standard setting, as well as to the advantages and risks of using AI. Mr Ramos also pointed to the instruments and regulations developed by other international organisations, especially the European Union.

He stressed that digitalisation has changed our political systems and that AI was playing a political role in our democracies, touching on every aspect of this complex institution. Furthermore, he stated that it was critical to create suitable accountability frameworks because AI possessed the capacity to both increase and decrease citizens' political engagement. Mr Ramos encouraged CDDEM members to be proactive when it comes to AI and digitalisation, and to approach their work with a positive outlook on its potential while keeping in mind any potential risks, which should be prevented through well-considered regulation of the sector.

The CDDEM agreed that the Secretariat, with the assistance of an expert consultant, would prepare an outline and draft study on advantages and risks of the use of artificial intelligence. The CDDEM will provide orientations at every step of the study's development.

<sup>11</sup> See background document Towards a Guidance Note on Civil Society Participation in Council Of Europe Work ([CDDEM\(2024\)4](#)).

<sup>12</sup> Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on [17 May 2024](#).

## 9. World Forum for Democracy – synergies and opportunities for introducing its conclusions into the CDDEM work

Ms **Claude Bernard** from the Council's Unit of Democratic Innovation, World Forum for Democracy and Schools of Political Studies gave information on opportunities to develop synergies between the CDDEM and the **WFD** as a forward-looking global venue where the Committee can exchange with a diverse range of experts, solicit contributions from interested stakeholders, and promote its work. Ms Bernard invited Committee members to find appropriate and fruitful ways to engage with the WFD, to take note of the initiatives presented at the forum and contribute to the development of the forum's future editions.

## 10. Working methods of the CDDEM

### 10.1. Establishment of working groups

The CDDEM adopted the Terms of Reference for the two Working Groups for the biennium 2024-2025. The Working Groups will prepare, respectively, the Parameters to facilitate the application and implementation of the Reykjavík Principles and other relevant Council of Europe standards to promote, protect and strengthen democracy throughout the member states (GT-P), and the deliverables relating to civil society participation: (1) updated Recommendation **CM/Rec(2007)14** of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the legal status of non-governmental organisations; (2) contribution to the implementation review report on Recommendation **CM/Rec(2018)11** of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the need to strengthen the protection and promotion of civil society space in Europe to be prepared by the Steering Committee on Human Rights (**CDDH**); and (3) a Guidance Note to enhance civil society participation in Council of Europe work, including as regards a Council of Europe Code of Conduct on civil society engagement (GT-CS).<sup>13</sup>

### 10.2. Planning of elections of CDDEM Chair, Vice-Chair and Bureau

The CDDEM was briefed by the Secretariat on the election rules and procedures. The Committee then agreed to **elect** the Chair, Vice-Chair, and Bureau members of the Committee at its next plenary meeting. Additionally, the Committee decided to elect at its next plenary seven members of each Working Group whose travel and subsistence expenses would be borne by the Council of Europe.

### 10.3. Appointment of CDDEM Rapporteurs on mainstreamed perspectives

The CDDEM appointed two rapporteurs on mainstreamed perspectives. Following these members' expressions of interest, the CDDEM appointed Mr **Edwin Lefebre** (Belgium) as **Gender Equality Rapporteur**, and Mr **Thomas Zandstra** (the Netherlands) as Youth Rapporteur, both with a two-year term of office.<sup>14</sup> Additional rapporteurs covering other mainstreamed perspective (the rights of the child, rights of persons with disabilities, Roma and travellers issues) may be appointed based on the demands of the CDDEM tasks and expressions of members' interest.

### 10.4. Participation of observer organisations and criteria for observer status

The CDDEM adopted the criteria and procedure for granting **observer status** to concerned civil society organisations, associations of public institutions, authorities and communities, representatives of business, as well as technical, professional and academic communities.<sup>15</sup>

## 11. Date of the next meeting

The CDDEM agreed on the date for the 2<sup>nd</sup> plenary meeting, to take place in Strasbourg on 29-30 October 2024.

<sup>13</sup> See documents **CDDEM(2024)6** and **CDDEM(2024)7** respectively.

<sup>14</sup> See the Gender Equality Strategy 2024–2029 (**CM(2024)17-final**) and the Youth Sector Strategy 2030 (**CM/Res(2020)2**).

<sup>15</sup> Granting of Observer Status with the CDDEM and its Subordinate Bodies – Criteria and Procedure (**CDDEM(2024)5**).

## 12. Any other business

The CDDEM was informed that the Ministers' Deputies, at their 1497<sup>th</sup> meeting on 30 April 2024, took note of Recommendation 502 (2024) "Local and Regional Authorities as Actors and Guarantors of the Rule of Law" adopted by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities at its 46<sup>th</sup> session (26 March 2024) and agreed to transmit it to CDDEM and CDDH for information and possible comment before 14 June 2024. The CDDEM agreed that the Secretariat would draft a short comment, to be submitted to CDDEM members for consideration and feedback.

## 13. Adoption of the abridged meeting report

The draft abridged meeting report on the 1<sup>st</sup> plenary meeting was presented to the CDDEM for consideration and comments. Following a lack of quorum in the meeting room, the abridged report was adopted in written procedure on 21 May 2024.

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## APPENDIX I

### Agenda

Strasbourg, 26 March 2024

CDDEM(2024)OJ1

## STEERING COMMITTEE ON DEMOCRACY (CDDEM)

1<sup>st</sup> Plenary Meeting  
Strasbourg, Palais de l'Europe · Room 11

13 May 2024, 9:30–13:00 / 14:30–17:30 (CET)  
14 May 2024, 9:30–13:00 / 14:30–17:30 (CET)

### AGENDA

1. **Opening of the meeting by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe**
2. **Adoption of the agenda and order of business**
3. **Information by the Secretariat: the role of the CDDEM and its place in the Council of Europe**
  - 3.1 *Introduction of the Council of Europe's intergovernmental work*
  - 3.2 *CDDEM Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure*
  - 3.3 *Tour de table of the CDDEM members*
4. **Challenges for democracy in Europe**
  - 4.1 *Findings from reports of the Secretary General on the State of Democracy, Human Rights and the Rule of Law*
  - 4.2 *Presentation of contemporary challenges facing European democracies and the relevant case-law of the [European Court of Human Rights](#)*
5. **Reykjavík Principles for Democracy and the parameters to facilitate their application and implementation**
  - 5.1 *Introduction of the aims pursued by the operationalisation of the [Reykjavík Principles for Democracy](#)*
  - 5.2 *Relevant work of the [European Commission for Democracy through Law \(Venice Commission\)](#)*
  - 5.3 *Relevant work of the [Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe](#)*

- 5.4 *Brainstorming on the objectives and format of the parameters and related workplan*
- 6. Freedom of association, shrinking civic space and meaningful participation in public life**
- 6.1 *Update of Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2007\)14](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the legal status of non-governmental organisations in Europe*
- 6.2 *Relevant work of the following entities and organisations:*
- *Department for the [Execution of Judgments](#) of the European Court of Human Rights*
  - *CINGO [Expert Council on NGO Law](#)*
  - *[Advisory Council on Youth](#)*
- 7. Enhancing civil society participation in the work of the Council of Europe**
- 7.1 *Current practice of civil society engagement in the Council of Europe*
- 7.2 *Draft guidance on enhancing civil society participation in Council of Europe work*
- 8. The role of artificial intelligence in public debate relating to democratic processes**
- Study on the use of AI in public debate*
- 9. World Forum for Democracy – synergies and opportunities for introducing its conclusions into the CDDEM work**
- 10. Working methods of the CDDEM**
- 10.1 *Establishment of working groups:*
- *on parameters to facilitate the application and implementation of the Reykjavík Principles and other relevant Council of Europe standards to promote, protect and strengthen democracy throughout the member States*
  - *on civil society participation*
- 10.2 *Planning of [elections](#) of CDDEM Chair, Vice-Chair and Bureau*
- 10.3 *Appointment of CDDEM Rapporteurs on mainstreamed perspectives*
- 10.4 *Participation of [observer organisations](#) and criteria for observer status*
- 11. Date of the next meeting**
- 12. Any other business**
- 13. Adoption of the abridged meeting report**
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## APPENDIX II

### List of Participants

## STEERING COMMITTEE ON DEMOCRACY (CDDEM)

1<sup>st</sup> Plenary Meeting  
Strasbourg, Palais de l'Europe · Room 11

13 May 2024, 9:30–13:00 / 14:30–17:30 (CET)  
14 May 2024, 9:30–13:00 / 14:30–17:30 (CET)

### LIST OF PARTICIPANTS<sup>1</sup>

\* \* \*

#### MEMBERS / MEMBRES

##### **Albania / Albanie**

Ms Ardiana HOBDAARI, Director, Department for International Organizations, Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs

##### **Andorra / Andorre**

Apologised for absence / Excusé

##### **Armenia / Arménie**

Ms Lilya AFRIKYAN, Coordinator of the “Open government partnership” Initiative, the Prime Minister's Office

##### **Austria / Autriche**

Mme Brigitte OHMS, Responsable de l'unité Protection internationale des droits de l'Homme et responsable adjointe du service constitutionnel au sein de la Chancellerie fédérale

Mme Alberina MULAJ, Experte juridique au sein du département des affaires européennes du bureau du Gouvernement provincial de Vienne

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

##### **Azerbaijan / Azerbaïdjan**

Mr Parviz RUSTAMOV, Deputy to the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Council of Europe

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<sup>1</sup> Participants listed *in italics* attended the meeting remotely.

**Belgium / Belgique**

M. Grégory STERCK, Attaché, Région de Bruxelles-Capitale, Service public régional de Bruxelles, Bruxelles Pouvoirs Locaux

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

M. Benjamin VAN CUTSEM, Directeur, Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles, Secrétariat Général, Direction CiMédé - Citoyenneté, Mémoire et Démocratie

M. Marco ALIBONI, Région wallonne, Directeur général - Service public de Wallonie - SPW Intérieur et Action sociale

M. Xavier KALBUSCH, Communauté germanophone, Délégué de la Communauté germanophone auprès de l'Union européenne (Apologised for absence / Excusé)

**Bosnia and Herzegovina / Bosnie-Herzégovine**

Mr Edin DILBEROVIĆ, Secretary of the Ministry by authorization of the Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina

**Bulgaria / Bulgarie**

Mr Atanas MLADENOV, Deputy to the Permanent Representative of Bulgaria to the Council of Europe

**Croatia / Croatie**

Mr Frano MATUŠIĆ, State Secretary for Political Affairs, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs

Ms Martina KUŠNJAČIĆ, Head of Office of the State Secretary for Political Affairs

Ms Lada ĆURKOVIĆ, Head of department for Regional International Organizations and Initiatives of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs

**Cyprus / Chypre**

Ms Elena KAREKLA, Commissioner for Administration Officer, Ministry of Interior

**Czechia / Tchéquie**

Mr Pavel MIČKA, Head of the unit of the Government Council for Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organisations Office of the Government of the Czech Republic

*Ms Barbora CARDONA ŠEVČÍKOVÁ, Head of International Organisations Unit, Human Rights and Transition Policy Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic*

**Denmark / Danemark**

Ms Natasha VOSS PLUM, Head of Governance and International Affairs with regard to issues of Local Democracy, Department of Public Administrative Law, Ministry of the Interior and Health

Mr Søren STAUNING, Special Advisor, Governance and International Affairs with regard to Issues of Local Democracy

**Estonia / Estonie**

Ms Katrin KIVI, Director of Division for Human Rights, Department for International Organisations and Human Rights, Ambassador at large for Human Rights and Migration, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ms Merit KAASIK, Desk Officer; Ministry of Foreign Affairs

*Ms Maarja KASK, Desk officer, rédactrice*

**Finland / Finlande**

Mr Niklas WILHELMSSON, Director for Democracy and Elections, Ministry of Justice



**France**

Mme Marie-Lorraine PESNEAUD, Chef de bureau, Direction générale des collectivités territoriales, Sous-direction des compétences et des institutions locales, Bureau des structures territoriales

M. Léonard WENNER, chargé de mission juridique, Direction générale des collectivités territoriales, Sous-direction des compétences et des institutions locales, Bureau des structures territoriales

**Georgia / Géorgie**

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

**Germany / Allemagne**

Mr Christian ALDENHOFF, Policy Officer, Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community, Division H III 1 "Resilient Democracy and Prevention of Extremism"

Ms Constanze LERNHART, Ministry of Regional Identity, Local Government, Building and Digitalization of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia, Head of Unit 302 "Local Government Tasks, Territorial Structure and Interests in Legislation and Administrative Implementation"

**Greece / Grèce**

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

Mr Gerasimos DONTAS, Deputy Permanent Representative of Greece to the Council of Europe

*Mr Ioannis MATHIOUDAKIS, Head of the Coordination Service, Ministry of Interior*

**Hungary / Hongrie**

Dr Barnabás SALLAI, Senior Government Adviser, Ministry of Public Administration and Regional Development

**Iceland / Islande**

Ms Anna Gunnhildur ÓLAFSDÓTTIR, Specialist at the Ministry of Infrastructure

**Ireland / Irlande**

Ms Caitríona DOYLE, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Ireland to the Council of Europe

Ms Hannah HARMAN CONLON, Deputy to the Permanent Representative

Mr Barry RYAN, Principal Officer, Franchise Unit of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

Mr Paris BEAUSANG, Assistant Principal Officer, Franchise Unit of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

**Italy / Italie**

Ms Sabrina UGOLINI, President of the Interministerial Committee for Human Rights, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

*Mr Roberto LATTANZI, Head of the Artificial Intelligence Department, Italian Data Protection Authority*

**Latvia / Lettonie**

Ms Agnese VILDE, Director of International Organizations and Human Rights Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**Liechtenstein**

Mr Domenik WANGER, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative of Liechtenstein to the Council of Europe and President of the Ministers' Deputies

**Lithuania / Lituanie**

Ms Jurgita GERMANAVIČIENĖ, Ambassador at Large for democracy promotion, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**Luxembourg**

Mme Mariza Isabel GUERREIRO VICTORIA, Conseillère juridique, élections, relations internationales, Ministère des Affaires intérieures

**Republic of Moldova / République de Moldova**

Mr Andrei STRAH, Deputy Secretary General of the Government, State Chancellery of the Republic of Moldova

**Montenegro**

Ms Bosiljka VUKOVIC-SIMONOVIC, Head of Division for the Council of Europe, Department for the OSCE and CoE/DG for Multilateral Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**Netherlands / Pays-Bas**

Mr Thomas ZANDSTRA, Head of the Democracy Department, Democracy and Governance Division, Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations

**North Macedonia / Macédoine du Nord**

Mr Igor DJUNDEV, Director of the Directorate for Multilateral Relations and Security Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of North Macedonia

**Norway / Norvège**

Ms Nina Britt BERGE, Senior Adviser, Norwegian Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development, Department of Local Government

Ms Anne-Karin ØDEGAARD, Head of Analysis and Evaluation, Norwegian Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development, Department of Local Government

Mr Vebjørn HEINES, Policy Director for Democracy and Human Rights, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**Portugal**

Ms Tânia MOURATO, Head of Department for Cooperation and Financial Affairs of the General Directorate of Local Authorities

Mme Catarina GARCIA, Adjointe du Représentant Permanente du Portugal auprès du Conseil de l'Europe

**Romania / Roumanie**

Mrs Anca Cristina PĂIUȘESCU, Head of the Unit of technical support for Romania's accession to OECD

**Slovak Republic / République Slovaque**

Ms Naďa FIRÁK KURILOVÁ, Director, Department of local state administration, self-government and foreign relations, Public administration section, Ministry of interior of the Slovak Republic

**Slovenia / Slovénie**

Mr Jurij MEZEK, Senior Advisor, Ministry of Public Administration, Local Self-Government Service  
 Ms Adijana AHMETOVIĆ, Under Secretary, Ministry of Public Administration, Local Self-Government Service

**Spain / Espagne**

Mme Silvia NEGRO ALOUSQUE, Sous-directrice des Relations Européennes et Internationales du Ministère de la Politique Territoriale et de la Mémoire Démocratique

**Sweden / Suède**

Mr Robert RYDBERG, Ambassador, Chargé d'Affaires a.i., Permanent Representation of Sweden to the Council of Europe

**Switzerland / Suisse**

M. Michel BESSON, Département fédéral de justice et police, Office fédéral de la justice, Chef de l'Unité projets législatifs II

M. Beat KUONI, Conseiller juridique, Chancellerie fédérale, juriste au sein de la Section des droits politiques

**Türkiye**

Mr Mustafa ÇİFTÇİLER, Head of Department, Directorate General of Provincial Administration  
 Mr Ahmet Evren BAL, Deputy to the Permanent Representative of Türkiye to the Council of Europe

**Ukraine**

Ms Oksana PAVLIUK, Head of the Division for local self-government development and cooperation with Council of Europe institutions of the Department for local self-government development, territorial organisation of power and administrative-territorial structure Ministry for Communities, Territories and Infrastructure Development of Ukraine

**United Kingdom / Royaume-Uni**

Ms Evi BELL, Deputy Director, Governance Reform and Democracy Unit, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Local Government & Communities Directorate, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

**PARTICIPANTS / PARTICIPANTS****Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe / Assemblée Parlementaire du Conseil de l'Europe**

*Mr George PAPANDEOU, General Rapporteur on Democracy / Rapporteur général sur la démocratie*

Ms Sonia SIRTORI, Head of Secretariat of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy / Cheffe du Secrétariat de la Commission des questions politiques et de la démocratie

Ms Sylvie AFFHOLDER, Head of Elections Division / Cheffe de la Division des élections

Mr Cesare COLOMBO, Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy / Division des questions politiques et de la démocratie

Mr Franck DAESCHLER, Parliamentary and Electoral Cooperation Division / Division de la Commission parlementaire et électorale

**Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe / Congrès des pouvoirs locaux et régionaux du Conseil de l'Europe**

Mr Niall SHEERIN, Centre of Expertise for Good Governance / Centre d'expertise sur la bonne gouvernance

**Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe / Conférence des OING du Conseil de l'Europe**

Mr Gerhard ERMISCHER, Chair of the INGOs Conference

Ms Sofia CALABRESE, Digital Policy Manager, European Partnership for Democracy

Mr Jeremy MCBRIDE, President of the CINGO Expert Council on NGO Law

**Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe / Commissaire aux droits de l'homme du Conseil de l'Europe**

Ms Charlotte ALTENHÖNER-DION, Adviser to the Commissioner / Conseillère du Commissaire

**European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) / Commission Européenne pour la démocratie par le droit (Commission de Venise)**

Ms Claire BAZY MALAURIE, President / Présidente

Ms Delphine FREYMAN, Deputy Secretary of the Commission / Secrétaire adjointe de la Commission

Ms Martina SILVESTRI, Secretariat/ Secrétariat

**European Court of Human Rights / Court Européenne des droits de l'homme**

Mr Erik WENNERSTRÖM, Judge / Juge

**Advisory Council on Youth / Conseil consultatif sur la jeunesse (CCJ)**

Ms Margo VORYKHAVA, Vice-Chair

**OTHER PARTICIPANTS / AUTRES PARTICIPANTS**

**European Union / Union Européenne**

*Ms Marie-Hélène BOULANGER, Directrice adjointe et Cheffe d'Unité chargée de la démocratie, de la citoyenneté de l'Union et libre circulation, DG JUST, Commission européenne*

Ms Julia KOBERLE, Legal trainee

Ms Giulia GIARDINO, Legal trainee

**Office For Democratic Institutions And Human Rights / Bureau des institutions démocratiques et des droits de l'homme (OSCE/BIDDH)**

Mr Konstantine VARDZELASHVILI, Head of Democratization Department

**OBSERVERS / OBSERVATEURS**

/

**GUEST SPEAKERS / INTERVENANTS**

*Mr Roberto Stefan FOA, Co-Director of the Cambridge Centre for the Future of Democracy*

Mr Mario HERNÁNDEZ RAMOS, Professor of Constitutional Law, Complutense University of Madrid, and Head of Spanish delegation and Bureau member of the Committee on Artificial Intelligence (CAI)

*Mr Danijel KALEZIC, ERA-LGBTI Equal Rights Association*

**SECRETARIAT****CDDEM Secretariat / Secrétariat du CDDEM**

Ms Urška UMEK, Secretary of the CDDEM / Secrétaire du CDDEM

Ms Cornelia PERLE, Senior Programme Advisor / Conseillère principale de programme

Mr Rémi WAGENHEIM, Project Officer / Assistant de projet

Ms Isabelle ETTER, Assistant / Assistante

Mr Alexander VOGT, Trainee / Stagiaire

**Other Secretariat / Autre Secrétariat**

Ms Marija PEJČINOVIĆ BURIĆ, Secretary General of the Council of Europe / Secrétaire Générale du Conseil de l'Europe

Ms Marja RUOTANEN, Director General of Democracy and Human Dignity / Directrice Générale de la démocratie et de la dignité humaine

Mr Matjaž GRUDEN, Director for Democracy / Directeur de la démocratie

Ms Irena GUIDIKOVA, Head of the Democratic Institutions and Freedoms Department / Cheffe du Service des institutions démocratiques et des libertés

Ms Gisella GORI, Advisor on Strategy and Work Co-ordination, Directorate General of Democracy and Human Dignity / Conseillère en stratégie et coordination des activités, Direction générale de la démocratie et de la dignité humaine

Mr Christophe SPECKBACHER, Head of Civil Society Unit / Chef de l'Unité de la société civile

Ms Claude BERNARD, Head of Unit for Democratic innovation, World Forum for Democracy and Schools of Political Studies / Cheffe de l'unité pour l'Innovation démocratique, Forum Mondial de la démocratie et Ecoles d'études politiques

**OTHER COUNCIL OF EUROPE PARTICIPANTS / AUTRES PARTICIPANTS DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE*****Steering Committee On Anti-Discrimination, Diversity And Inclusion / Comité directeur sur l'anti-discrimination, la diversité et l'inclusion (CDADI)***

Ms Charlotte GILMARTIN, Co-Secretary of the CDADI / Co-secrétaire du CDADI

***Steering Committee for Human Rights / Comité directeur pour les droits de l'homme (CDDH)***

Ms Krista OINONEN, Chair / Présidente

***European Committee on Legal Co-Operation (CDCJ)***

Ms Sophio GELASHVILI, Head of Unit, Legal Co-operation Division / Cheffe d'unité, Co-opération juridique

***Steering Committee on Media and Information Society / Comité directeur sur les médias et la société de l'information (CDMSI)***

Ms Artemiza-Tatiana CHISCA, Head of Freedom of Expression and CDMSI Division, Secretary of the CDMSI / Cheffe de division, Liberté d'expression et CDMSI, et Secrétaire du CDMSI

Ms Giulia LUCCHESI, Secretary of the MSI-AI / Secrétaire du MSI-AI

***Youth Department / Service de la jeunesse***

Mr Tobias FLESSENKEMPER, Head of the Youth Department/ Chef du Service de la Jeunesse, Directorate for Democracy – Direction de la Démocratie

Ms Gordana BERJAN, Head of Division, European Youth Foundation / Cheffe de division, Fonds Européen pour la Jeunesse

Ms Stephanie BUREL, Policy Advisor, Youth Policy Division / Conseillère politique, Politiques de Jeunesse

*Ms Mara GEORGESCU, Programme Manager, European Youth Foundation / Gestionnaire de programme, Fonds Européen pour la Jeunesse*

**Division for Gender Equality / Division pour l'égalité de genre**

Ms Camille GANGLOFF, Head of Gender Equality policies Unit / Cheffe d'unité, Politiques de l'égalité de genre

**Group of States Against Corruption (GRECO)**

Ms Anne WEBER, Administrative officer / Administratrice

**Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism – Moneyval**

Mr Lado LALICIC, Deputy Executive Secretary and Head of Unit / Secrétaire exécutif adjoint et chef d'unité

**European Committee on Crime Problems (CDPC)**

Ms Eva PASTRANA, Head of the Criminal Justice Division and Secretary of the CDPC / Cheffe de division de la Division du Droit pénal et Secrétaire du CDPC

**Brussels Office / Bureau de Bruxelles**

*Mr Andriy ZAYATS, Head of Office / Chef du Bureau*

*Mr Humbert DE BIOLLEY, Deputy Head of Office / Chef du Bureau adjoint*

**INTERPRETERS / INTERPRETES**

Ms Amanda LARIVIERE

Ms Elisabetta BASSU

Ms Clarissa WORSDALE

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