

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Strasbourg, 12 November 2025

CDDEM(2025)21

**STEERING COMMITTEE ON DEMOCRACY
(CDDEM)**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE WORKING GROUP
ON MULTILEVEL GOVERNANCE
(GT-GPN)**

Prepared by the Secretariat

Terms of Reference of the Working Group on multilevel governance (GT-GPN)

Adopted by the CDDEM at its 4th plenary meeting (26-28 November 2025)

Task

Under the authority of the Steering Committee on Democracy (CDDEM), the Working Group on multilevel governance (GT-GPN) is instructed to complete the following deliverables, within the following deadlines:

	Deadline ▼
Draft Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States on multilevel governance	31/12/2027
Implementation review report on Recommendation CM/Rec(2023)5 on the Principles of Good Democratic Governance	31/12/2027

Timeline

The GT-GPN tasks are comprised of the following steps, to be delivered within the following deadlines:

	Deadline ▼
<p>Feasibility study and outline of the draft Recommendation on multilevel governance</p> <p><i>To be reviewed and discussed at the first GT-GPN meeting, for submission to the 5th plenary meeting of the CDDEM</i></p>	March 2026
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First draft of the Recommendation on multilevel governance - Outline of the Implementation review report on Recommendation CM/Rec(2023)5 <p><i>To be reviewed and discussed at the second GT-GPN meeting, for submission to the 6th plenary meeting of the CDDEM</i></p>	September 2026
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Revised draft of the Recommendation on multilevel governance - First draft of the Implementation review report on Recommendation CM/Rec(2023)5 <p><i>To be reviewed and discussed at the third GT-GPN meeting, for submission to the 7th plenary meeting of the CDDEM</i></p>	March 2027

(Public) consultations on the draft Recommendation on multilevel governance	July 2027
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Final draft of the Recommendation on multilevel governance for CDDEM approval - Final draft of the Implementation review report on Recommendation CM/Rec(2023)5 for CDDEM adoption <p><i>To be finalised and approved at the fourth GT-GPN meeting, following the orientations provided at the 7th plenary meeting of the CDDEM</i></p>	October 2027

Composition

All member states can nominate representatives and/or independent experts and participate in the working group GT-GPN. The Council of Europe will bear the travel and subsistence expenses of experts from seven member states, taking into account in particular relevant expertise, geographical representation, gender balance and inclusion of various legal systems. It will additionally bear the travel and subsistence expenses of two independent experts appointed to the working group by the Secretary General.

Other member states may designate representatives without defrayal of expenses. Institutions and bodies with the status of CDDEM participant or observer may also designate representatives to the working group, without defrayal of expenses.

The experts participating in the working group should have adequate specialisation in (one of) the following areas: constitutional and administrative law specialising in decentralisation and local self-government; public administration reform, strategic management, and coordination mechanisms between levels of government; fiscal equalisation systems and collaborative approaches to the distribution of funds between levels of government; and participatory governance mechanisms (consultations, participatory budgeting, co-management).

Candidatures for membership in the GT-GPN working group, with defrayal of expenses, shall be submitted to the Secretariat. The list of candidates whose expenses are to be borne by the Council of Europe shall be communicated to the CDDEM members before the second plenary meeting of the Steering Committee. The election of working group members will be held by secret ballot at the CDDEM's fourth plenary meeting.

Working methods

The working group GT-GPN will hold up to four meetings, in hybrid or online format: two in 2026 and two in 2027. Written consultations and additional online meetings are encouraged, as necessary. The GT-GPN is furthermore encouraged to hold consultations with other bodies within and outside the Council of Europe, including civil society organisations. It can appoint a rapporteur, a drafting group or both, and/or rely on contributions from expert consultants.

Provisions of Resolution [CM/Res\(2021\)3](#) on intergovernmental committees and subordinate bodies, their terms of reference and working methods are applicable mutatis mutandis to the working methods of the GT-GPN.

Background documents

The working group GT-GPN is expected to take into account pertinent standards, reports and documents produced under the aegis of the Council of Europe and other organisations, including:

- European Charter of Local Self Government ([CETS No. 122](#)) and its Additional Protocol on the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority ([CETS No. 207](#))
- European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities (CETS 106) and its additional protocols: first Additional Protocol ([CETS No. 159](#)); Protocol No. 2 concerning interterritorial co-operation ([CETS No. 169](#)); Protocol No. 3 concerning Euroregional Co-operation Groupings (ECGs) ([CETS No. 206](#))
- Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2023\)5](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the principles of good democratic governance, and its [Explanatory Memorandum](#)
- European Committee on Democracy and Governance (CDDG): [Report on multilevel governance](#) (2023)
- Parliamentary Assembly: "[Political strategies to prevent, prepare for and face the consequences of natural disasters](#)", Report Doc. 15738 (2023), Recommendation Rec. 2251 (2023), Resolution Res. 2493 (2023)
- Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2022\)2](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member States on democratic accountability of elected representatives and elected bodies at local and regional level
- Congress [Report CG\(2021\)4010 - Resolution 467 \(2021\) - Recommendation 455 \(2021\)](#) "Recurring issues based on assessments resulting from Congress monitoring of the European Charter of Local Self-Government and election observation missions (reference period 2017-2020)"
- Congress [Report CG\(2021\)40-07 - Resolution 466 \(2021\) - Recommendation 453 \(2021\)](#) "Ensuring respect of the European Charter of Local Self-Government in major crisis situations"
- CDDG [Special report on democratic governance and COVID-19](#) (November 2020)
- Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2019\)3](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the supervision of local authorities' activities
- Congress: [Report CG35\(2018\)20, Resolution 437 \(2018\)](#) – "The consultation of local authorities by higher levels of government"
- Congress: Resolution 351 (2012), Recommendation 333 (2012) - [Second-tier local authorities – intermediate governance in Europe](#)
- Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2011\)11](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the funding by higher-level authorities of new competences for local authorities 35
- [Report on multilevel governance \[CDDG\(2023\)12\]](#)
- Congress: [Report CPR\(17\)2, Resolution 293 \(2009\), Recommendation 278 \(2009\)](#) – "Regions with legislative powers: towards multi-level governance"
- Congress: Report CG(15)10, [Resolution 260 \(2008\)](#) - Partnership between local and regional authorities and NGOs in Council of Europe member States
- Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2007\)12](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member states on capacity building at local and regional level
- [Reykjavik Declaration](#) – United around Our Values
- OECD: [Principles of Public Administration](#) (2023 edition)
- OECD: [Recommendation on Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development](#) (2019)
- OECD: [Making Decentralisation Work - A Handbook for Policy-Makers](#), report, 2019
- OECD: [Subnational Public-Private Partnerships - Meeting Infrastructure Challenges](#), report 2018
- OECD: [Rethinking Regional Development Policy-making](#), report, 2018
- OECD: [Multi-level Governance Reforms - Overview of OECD Country Experiences](#), report, 2017
- European Union / Committee of the Regions: "[White Paper on Multilevel Governance](#)", Committee of the Regions, 2009