COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Strasbourg, 10 June 2026 CDDEM(2026)11

STEERING COMMITTEE ON DEMOCRACY (CDDEM)

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5th plenary meeting

(8–10 June 2026)

ABRIDGED MEETING REPORT

Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

The Steering Committee on Democracy (CDDEM) held its 5th plenary meeting in Strasbourg on 8–10 June 2026 with Katrin Kivi (Estonia) in the Chair.

The Chair welcomed the new members from Norway, Slovenia and the United Kingdom and the new observer, the Open Government Partnership, who attended the meeting for the first time.

The agenda of the meeting appears in the appendix. The full report of the meeting including the list of participants is available on the CDDEM's website.

Gender distribution: 109 participants, 51 men (46,8%) and 58 women (53,2%)

List of items for decision by the Committee of Ministers

CDDEM invites the Committee of Ministers to:

- take note of the abridged report of the 5th plenary meeting of the Steering Committee on Democracy (8–10 June 2026).

List of items for information of the Committee of Ministers

CDDEM:

- took note of the information provided by the Chair and the Secretariat, presented by Roberto Olla, Head of Department of Democratic Institutions and Freedoms, on recent developments since the 4th plenary meeting (18-20 November 2025) and on issues of relevance to the Committee's mandate;

- held an exchange of views with the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Alain Berset, on the New Democratic Pact for Europe; discussed the contribution of the CDDEM to the Pact consultations and possible future inputs of the Committee to the implementation of the Pact, including through the Reykjavik Parameters for Democracy and related work on democratic security and resilience;

- took note of the update provided by Edwin Lefebre, Chair of GT-P2, and the Secretariat on the work of the CDDEM working group responsible for preparing the methodological framework to support the application of the Reykjavik Parameters for Democracy, as well as of the report of the first meeting of GT-P2; took note of the information provided by Gentiana Gola, Advisor in the Democracy Assessment team at International IDEA; discussed and provided guidance for the further development of the draft methodological framework for the application of the Reykjavik Parameters with a view to approving it for piloting at the CDDEM plenary meeting in November;

- held an exchange of views with Aurora Ailincai, Head of Council of Europe's Anti-discrimination and Inclusion Department; examined the revised draft Guidelines on enhancing participation in elections of women, girls, young persons and persons in vulnerable situations, presented by Professor Anna Lavizzari, CDDEM consultant, and the Secretariat; discussed the accompanying compilation of promising practices and provided guidance for the finalisation of the instrument with a view to adopting it at the CDDEM plenary meeting in November;

- took note of the update provided by Alfonso Carlos García Romero, Chair of GT-GPN, on the work of the CDDEM working group responsible for the preparation of a draft recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States on multilevel governance, as well as of the report of the first meeting of GT-GPN; examined the preliminary outline of the recommendation, held an exchange of views with Dr Cezary Trutkowski and Professor Ioannis Papadopoulos, CDDEM consultants, and provided guidance for the preparation of the first draft of the recommendation;

- agreed to prepare an implementation review report on Committee of Ministers' Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)5 on standards for e-voting and CM(2022)10 Guidelines on the use of ICT in electoral processes in Council of Europe member States; examined and approved the preliminary concept note for a workshop to be held in conjunction with the CDDEM plenary meeting in November 2026; agreed to circulate a questionnaire as a basis for the review by mid-July and provided guidance for the organisation of the workshop, including the involvement of relevant stakeholders, notably election management bodies;

- agreed to prepare an implementation review report on Recommendation CM/Rec(2023)5 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the principles of good democratic governance, with a focus on the practice of good administration, and provided guidance for the development of a questionnaire to be addressed to member States;

- agreed to prepare an implementation review report on Recommendation CM/Rec(2023)6 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on deliberative democracy, drawing on an ongoing questionnaire on democracy assessment and participatory consultations, to which all delegations are invited to contribute, as well as on desk research;

- took note of information provided by the Secretariat concerning preparations for the 2026 World Forum for Democracy, including its revised format and concept focused on democratic security and collective foresight, and discussed the Forum's relevance in promoting positive developments in democracy, as well as the importance of continued engagement and support from member States;

- finalised and took note of the Study on Generative Artificial Intelligence and Democracy: Advantages and Risks of the Use of Generative AI in Public Debate and Democratic Processes; discussed possible follow-up activities in the field of artificial intelligence and democracy in light of the study's findings and recommendations; agreed to invite members, participants and observers to provide written inputs and orientations by end September, on the basis of which the Secretariat will prepare a proposal for a practical tool building on the study's conclusions, in consultation with the Steering Committee for New and Emerging Digital Technologies (CDNET), for the Committee's consideration at its plenary meeting in November 2026;

- exchanged views with the representatives of the Advisory Council on Youth (CCJ) and the Youth Department Josef Burker and Nina Grmusa on the integration of the youth perspective into the work of the CDDEM; took note of the Reference Framework on the integration of the youth perspective and appointed Peter Andre (Austria) as Youth Rapporteur;

- took note of information provided by Kristian Bartholin, Secretary to the Committee of Experts on Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (PC-FIMI), concerning the feasibility study on the possible elaboration of a Council of Europe legal instrument on foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI), including disinformation, prepared by the committee; discussed recent developments relating to FIMI and follow-up to the decisions adopted at the 135th Session of the Committee of Ministers in Chişinău;

- held an exchange of views with Claudia Luciani, Director of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, on recent activities of the Congress and possible synergies with the work of the CDDEM, notably in the areas of multilevel governance, electoral resilience, deliberative democracy and the New Democratic Pact for Europe;

- held an exchange of views with Catherine Hugel, Head of Secretariat of the Parliamentary Assembly's Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, on recent Parliamentary Assembly activities, including the Parliamentary Alliance for Free and Fair Elections and the Ad hoc Committee on the New Democratic Pact for Europe; in this context, the CDDEM was invited to contribute to a Parliamentary Assembly reflection on an early warning mechanism for democratic backsliding;

- held an exchange of views with Daniel Fleischer-Ambrus, Team Leader for Democracy, DG JUST, European Commission, on recent European Union initiatives related to safeguarding democracy, notably the implementation of the European Democracy Shield;

- held an initial discussion on possible priority topics for the future work of the Committee during the next programming period (2028–2031) and provided preliminary orientations for further reflection;

- examined the applications for observer status submitted by the Association Européenne pour la Défense des Droits et des Libertés (ASSEDEL) and Nordic Safe Cities and decided to postpone consideration of the applications until its plenary meeting in November 2026, pending further reflection on the criteria for granting observer status; invited members to provide written input for a Bureau discussion on refining the criteria, on the basis of which the Secretariat will prepare a proposal for the Committee's consideration;

- took note of information provided by CDDEM members from Albania, Armenia, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia, Sweden and the United Kingdom on recent legislative, policy and institutional developments relevant to the Committee's mandate in their respective States, as well as of updates provided by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and the Conference of INGOs on activities of relevance to the Committee's work;

- took note of information provided by Niklas Wilhelmsson (Vice-Chair, Finland) concerning a conference "Towards trusted and inclusive electoral processes: the role of observers", co-organised by the PACE, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe in Paris on 28-29 April 2026;

- examined draft comments on Recommendation 2305 (2026) – "Violence and hate speech against politicians: a threat to democracy" adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and on Recommendation 543 (2026) – "Free elections at the local and regional level: A fundamental right to strengthen grassroots democracy" adopted by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, and agreed to provide further comments in writing by 22 June 2026;

- organised a public hearing entitled "From diagnosis to action: towards democratic security", dedicated to the Reykjavik Parameters for Democracy, bringing together representatives of member States, Council of Europe bodies, international organisations, academia and civil society to discuss the future application of the Parameters and their contribution to democratic resilience and democratic security;

- adopted the abridged report of its 5th plenary meeting.

Resource implications

The above activities of the CDDEM were conducted within the foreseen budgetary envelopes.

APPENDIX

AGENDA

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Adoption of the agenda and order of business
3. Information from the Chair and the Secretariat
4. Exchange of views on the New Democratic Pact for Europe with the Secretary General
Implementing the Reykjavík Principles for Democracy **5.** Standard setting: Framework for supporting the use of the Reykjavik Parameters for the application and implementation of the Reykjavik Principles for Democracy
Supporting elections **6.** Standard setting: Guidelines on enhancing participation in elections of women, girls and young persons, vulnerable groups **7.** Report following exchanges on the implementation of Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)5 on standards for e-voting and Guidelines on new technologies and the different stages of the electoral process, involving the Venice Commission and Election Management Bodies
Supporting member states to strengthen and maintain good democratic governance at all levels **8.** Standard setting: draft Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States on multilevel governance **9.** Implementation review report on Recommendation CM/Rec(2023)5 on the Principles of Good Democratic Governance
Participatory and deliberative democracy **10.** Implementation review report on Recommendation CM/Rec(2023)6 on deliberative democracy and/or handbook collecting best practices
Emerging issues **11.** Study on advantages and risks of the use of generative artificial intelligence in public debate relating to democratic processes and an instrument/practical tool to build on its findings
12. Requests for observer status with the CDDEM
13. Update on the work of PC-FIMI (European Committee on Crime Problems, CDPC)

14. Update on the work of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities
15. Update on the work of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly
16. World Forum for Democracy
17. Update on the European Union developments related to safeguarding democracy
18. Recent national developments in the areas of activity of the CDDEM
19. Participation of CDDEM members in events of relevance to the CDDEM
20. CDDEM priority topics for the next quadrennium: initial reflections
21. Dates of the next meeting
22. Any other business
23. Adoption of the abridged meeting report

CDDEM event

Public hearing on the Reykjavik Parameters: Taking stock to advance our democracies