

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



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**EUROPEAN COMMITTEE ON DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE  
(CDDG)**

**14<sup>th</sup> Plenary meeting**  
29-30 November 2021  
(Strasbourg and by videoconference)

**ABRIDGED MEETING REPORT**  
Adopted on 30 November 2021

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At its 14th plenary meeting (29-30 November 2021, Strasbourg and by videoconference), the European Committee on Democracy and Governance (CDDG):

1. adopted the agenda of the meeting, which was chaired by Mr Markku Mölläri (Finland), Chair of the Committee;

### **Information**

2. took note of the report of the 21<sup>st</sup> CDDG Bureau meeting (held on 14-15 October 2021, in hybrid format);
3. held an exchange of views with Ms Claudia Luciani, Director of Human Dignity, Equality and Governance (DGII), on the recent adoption of the budget and terms of reference of intergovernmental committees, the conclusions of the 9<sup>th</sup> edition of the World Forum for Democracy and other subject matters;

### **State of implementation of the CDDG activities according to its terms of reference 2020-2021**

4. noted with satisfaction that, at the end of the biennium 2020-2021, its terms of reference for that period have been successfully implemented, both with regard to the general and the specific tasks, despite the health crisis and its consequences;

### **Democracy and technology**

5. heard presentations by Mr Almir Šahović (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Chair of the Working Group on democracy and technology (GT-DT) and Ms Ardita Driza Maurer, University of Zurich, Switzerland (independent expert) on progress made by the working group and the final draft guidelines on the use of ICT in the electoral process;
6. considered and approved, with minor amendments, the above draft guidelines, and entrusted the Secretariat to include possible editorial and other changes recommended by the editorial department and Office of the legal advisor before transmission of the document to the Committee of Ministers;
7. heard an update from Mr Peter Andre (Austria), CDDG Rapporteur on democracy and technology and CDDG representative to the Ad hoc Committee on Artificial Intelligence (CAHAI), on activities of the CAHAI and its working groups;

### **Democratic accountability**

8. heard a presentation by Mr Paul-Henri Philips (Belgium), chair of the Working Group on accountability (GT-RE) and the Secretariat on progress made by the working group and the final draft Recommendation for the Committee of Ministers on democratic accountability of elected officials and elected bodies at local and regional level;
9. considered and approved, with minor amendments, the above draft Recommendation, and entrusted the Secretariat to include possible editorial and other changes recommended by the editorial department and Office of the legal advisor before transmission of the document to the Committee of Ministers;

10. considered and approved a “complementary study” on accountability, which was produced in the context of the working group activities on the above Recommendation, for publication on the CDDG website;

### **Promoting democratic governance through shared experience**

11. held an exchange of views with:

- Ms Romina Kuko, Deputy Minister of Interior, Albania,
- Mr Vendelín Leitner, State Secretary, Ministry of Interior, Slovak Republic and
- Mr Vache Terteryan, Deputy Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure, Armenia;

12. heard information on law and policy developments concerning territorial, administrative, electoral and other reforms in Belgium, Cyprus, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway and the United Kingdom;

13. took note of the current state of signatures and ratification of the seven treaties falling under its responsibility and agreed to resume consideration of this subject at its next meeting;

### **Terms of reference of the CDDG (2022-2025) and outlook of activities 2022**

14. took note of the terms of reference for 2022-2025, adopted by the Committee of Ministers;

15. discussed and approved the creation of three working groups and their terms of reference, two of which would start working in 2022 on specific tasks i) and ii) of the new terms of reference, and the third one launching preliminary work before the end of 2022 on specific task iii);

16. invited countries interested to propose nominations of experts by 20 December 2021 for the future working group principles of good democratic governance and by 21 January 2022 for the future working group on deliberative and participatory democracy, and entrusted the Bureau with the assistance of the Secretariat to prepare a list of those whose costs would be borne by the Council of Europe, for approval by the CDDG by written procedure;

17. discussed and approved, following some amendments, a work plan for 2022 including a provisional calendar of meetings;

### **Activities of the Centre of Expertise for Good Governance**

18. received and took note of presentations on the annual report 2021 of the Center of Expertise for Good Governance and its strategic planning for 2022-2025, as well as on the European Label of Governance Excellence (ELOGE), including recent decisions of the ELOGE Accreditation Platform; expressed appreciation for the work of the Centre of Expertise;

### **Presidency of the Committee of Ministers**

19. heard presentations on activities of the Hungarian presidency, by Mr David Kojza, on the programme of the Italian presidency, by Mr Francesco Giustino, and on the preparation of the future Icelandic presidency, by Ms Stefania Traustadóttir;

### **Activities of the Committee of Ministers and other Council of Europe bodies**

20. took note of a Secretariat memorandum on activities of particular interest to the CDDG carried out by other Council of Europe bodies;

21. held an exchange of views with:

- Mr Gerhard Ermischer, President of the Conference of INGOs, on the Conference's recent reforms, its strategy 2021-2024 and areas of common concern and interest
- Mr Leendert Verbeek, President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, on the Congress' recent activities and plans and priorities for the next five years; and took note of his proposal that the CDDG invites the Chair of the Congress' Governance Committee, Ms Jelena Drenjanin (Sweden), for a future exchange of views;

22. heard a presentation on the activities of the Division on elections and participatory democracy, by its Head of Division;

23. considered and approved comments on PACE Recommendation 2212 (2021) "More participatory democracy to tackle climate change", in response to a request from the Committee of Ministers;

### **Gender mainstreaming in the work of the CDDG**

24. heard a presentation by the gender equality rapporteurs Mr Edwin Lefebvre and Ms Siobhan Smyth;

### **Review of the implementation of Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)5 on standards for e-voting**

25. held a discussion on the implementation of Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)5 on standards for e-voting, in the light of a presentation by Mr Gregor Wenda (Austria) on the results of a compilation of responses from member States to a Council of Europe questionnaire, and with the participation of representatives from national election management bodies and the Venice Commission;

**Elections**

26. elected by acclamation, for the implementation of the forthcoming terms of reference: as Chair: Mr Paul Rowsell (United Kingdom) for 1 year; as Vice-Chair: Mr Edwin Lefebre (Belgium, Flemish Region) for 1 year; as Bureau members: Mr Peter Andre (Austria) for 2 years, Ms Monika Kurian (Slovak Republic) for 2 years, Ms Gordana Gapikj-Dimitrovska (North Macedonia) for 2 years, Mr Markku Mölläri (Finland) for 2 years, Ms Stefania Traustadóttir (Iceland) for a 1-year term.

**Other business**

27. renewed the mandates of the rapporteurs as follows: on Gender equality, Mr Edwin Lefebre (Belgium, Flemish Region) and Ms Siobhan Smyth (United Kingdom), on Democracy and Technology, Mr Peter Andre (Austria), on social matters including rights of persons with disabilities, Mr Markku Mölläri (Finland);

28. thanked Mr Paul-Henri Philips (Belgium), on the occasion of his retirement, for his 21 years of service, commitment and contribution to the Committee, and wished him well for the future;

**Date and place of the next meeting**

29. took note that its 15th plenary meeting would be held on 21-22 April 2022 (modalities to be defined), in accordance with the workplan approved for 2022.