



Strasbourg, 10 November 2022

CDDG(2022)17  
Item 7 of the agenda

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

**THE NEED FOR GREEN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION  
IN THE CONTEXT OF GOOD DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE  
EXCHANGE OF BEST EUROPEAN PRACTICE**

Conference in cooperation with the Icelandic Presidency  
of the Committee of Ministers

**Concept note**

For consideration by the CDDG at its 16<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting  
(28-29 November 2022)

CDDG members are invited to:

- examine and approve the organisation and preliminary format of the conference
- suggest potential speakers and participants for the event

Secretariat Memorandum  
prepared by the  
Directorate General of Democracy and Human Dignity  
Democratic Governance Division

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## **Background and rationale**

Sustainability and long-term orientation are among the principles of Good Democratic Governance. Over the last decades, the world is increasingly experiencing erratic weather patterns, leading to droughts, floods, and heatwaves – with detrimental consequences to people and eco-systems. It is therefore not surprising that tackling climate and environmental-related challenges is high on the political agenda of many governments of the Council of Europe member States, the European Union and other multilateral institutions. There is also increasing consensus on the urgency to transition towards a low carbon economy. The Paris Agreement in 2015 as well as the [European Green Deal](#) from 2020 set out ambitious targets to reduce carbon emission and address climate change. While the transition to more sustainable economy is a task for the whole society, the public sector is ideally placed to play a key role.

Public administration can lead the way regarding the reduction of carbon emissions, better management of energy resources and other environmentally impactful factors. Decisive action on the part of the public administration in turn will encourage individuals, organisations, and businesses to play their part. In fact, public administrations in many member States have already started playing a leading role by providing policy incentives to enable the transition and by implementing internal changes to their own modus operandi and activities to minimise their own direct and indirect impact on natural resources, energy capacities and the environment.

“Turning public administration green” also means formulating a vision to be shared with and by the population and upholding a commitment to find a balance between short-term (economic) and long-term sustainability interests. The Council of Europe undoubtedly offers a good platform for the exchange and promotion of good practice in this area, among others in the context of its work on public administration reform, regional and cross-border cooperation and good democratic governance.

## **Purpose**

The aim of the conference would be to showcase best practice from member States, discuss opportunities and challenges for public administration as well as ways to build resilience and mitigate risks. The outcome of discussion will also feed into a Report on green public administration the CDDG is tasked to prepare.

## **Date and venue**

Wednesday, 26 April 2023 (before the 17<sup>th</sup> CDDG plenary 27-28 April 2023), at the Council of Europe HQ in Strasbourg.

## **Audience / participants**

This one-day conference is addressed to members of the CDDG; experts on and practitioners of green public administration; relevant stakeholders; high-level representatives and local leaders. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iceland will address the participants in the context of the Icelandic presidency of the CM.

## **Content**

It is proposed to focus on concrete examples from all levels of government, combined with a high-level discussion on the role of public administration.

- **Greening of the public administration: from policy to action**

Public administration is ideally placed to take the lead as it has a wide repertoire of instruments to take action, including setting concrete targets, introducing internal guidelines, promoting green budgeting and green procurement, implementing best practices, supporting the efforts of external counterparts, and raising awareness of civil servants. This section will focus on showcasing best practice from member States and international organisations such as OECD, OSCE and EU and on identifying factors for success and ways to overcome challenges.

- **Green public administration: what cities can do**

At local level, mayors and councillors can demonstrate leadership by committing to reduction of carbon emissions and supporting innovative projects, including by civil society, private companies, and academia. This section will explore do's and don'ts, highlight lessons learned from different municipalities across member States, draw attention to the interaction with relevant stakeholders, and show initiatives such as the European Green Capital or One Planet City.

- **High-level discussion: Leading the way**

There is growing consensus of the urgency to take action towards a low carbon-emission economy in order to be able to tackle and mitigate the impact of climate change on the longer run, including with regard to the prevention of future global and transnational crises of an unprecedented scale. This section will feature a high-level discussion about the leading role of the public sector and draw possible conclusion for further action of the CDDG and its Working Group on Green Public Administration.