

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



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

REPORT OF THE 16th PLENARY MEETING
(Strasbourg, 28-29 November 2022)

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

1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

Mr Paul Rowsell (United Kingdom), Chair of the CDDG, opened the meeting and welcomed the new and other members and participants. He recalled the general Council of Europe procedure for the designation of new committee members, which needed to be officialised through the channel of the countries' permanent representation to the Council of Europe. The CDDG took note of the above.

The list of participants appears in Appendix 1. The Committee adopted its agenda as it appears in Appendix 2.

2. Information on recent activities and developments

The Chair commented on his recent [letter](#) to all members which had been circulated together with the convocation, stressing *inter alia* the importance of the CDDG's work in the current general European context and the need for all CDDG members to actively participate in the work including by interacting with, and involving experts from other national institutions given the broad mandate of the Committee. He also briefed participants about the Bureau meeting of 13-14 October 2022 (document [[CDDG-Bu\(2022\)14](#)]). The Secretariat also provided additional information about the organisation of the meeting. The CDDG took note of the above.

3. Exchange of views on recent developments, including the Report of the High-Level Reflection Group of the Council of Europe

The CDDG held a panel-based exchange of views on important developments.

Ms Claudia Luciani, Director of Human Dignity, Equality and Governance referred to the recent [Report of the high-level reflection group](#) and [Committee of Ministers' decision to hold a fourth summit](#) of Heads of State and Government (16-17 May 2023, Reykjavik, Iceland). Renewing democracy and democratic security, especially the need to deal with the backsliding of democracy, featured high on the agenda. Ms Luciani encouraged the CDDG to play an active role in the upcoming discussions, including for the possible developing of democracy benchmarks. The recent 22nd edition of the [World Forum for Democracy](#) had been an opportunity to showcase the importance of democratic innovation. The CDDG's work on deliberative democracy and on principles of good democratic governance was timely and the final documents to be adopted would deserve active promotion. Ms Luciani also encouraged close cooperation with the Committee on Artificial Intelligence given the importance of the element of democracy in the new convention to be drafted on artificial intelligence. In response to a question, Ms Luciani then shared her views on how the CDDG's work and the Fourth summit could feed into each other.

Mr Thorvardur Thorsson, Deputy Permanent Representative of Iceland to the Council of Europe, presented the priorities of the [Icelandic Presidency](#) of the Committee of Ministers, centred around four main themes and the interlinkages between them, namely: Council of Europe core principles of human rights, democracy, and rule of law; environment; equality; children and youth. He referred to the impact of the Russian aggression for the Council of Europe and to the hosting of the Fourth Summit by his country including: the publication of a timeline for the preparation of the event ("Road to Reykjavik" available on the dedicated [Icelandic government's webpage](#)), plans for an open call for contributions and making it a green event. He also confirmed Iceland's willingness to co-host in April 2023 under the Icelandic Presidency, a conference with the CDDG on greening administration (see item 7 hereinafter). Participants then sought further information on the joint conference with the CDDG and commented on Iceland's plans.

Ambassador Svetlana Geleva, Permanent Representative of North Macedonia to the Council of Europe and Chair of the Committee of Ministers' Rapporteur Group on Democracy (GR-DEM), provided information on the working methods of the Committee and its seven Rapporteur Groups including the GR-DEM which had responsibility for following the work of the CDDG and preparing the work of the Committee of Ministers regarding activities related to the pillar of democracy. She underlined the importance of the CDDG's recent and ongoing work on accountability in the public sector, on participatory and deliberative democracy and on good democratic governance in the present context of democratic backsliding. With the war in Ukraine and increased radicalisation, this backsliding had become an even greater challenge. Several proposals contained in the report of the high-level reflection group and the summit in Reykjavik aim to addressing these issues. In the ensuing discussion, Ambassador Geleva said that a democracy index was a complex matter for the Council of Europe and that no decision had been taken yet on the proposals for an early warning mechanism on anti-democratic trends. She welcomed the suggestion of an exchange of views with the CDDG Chair at a forthcoming meeting of the GR-DEM.

Mr Rafael Benitez, Director of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities updated the CDDG about recent and upcoming Congress developments of common interest including: a) the election of a) the recent report on ["A fundamental right to the environment: a matter for local and regional authorities - Towards a green reading of the European Charter of Local Self-Government"](#) which calls i.a. for the drafting of an Additional Protocol to the European Charter of Local Self-Government and generally for a green reading of the Charter. He pointed out that the CDDG might be called upon to provide comments about those proposals; b) a new [human rights handbook for local authorities on the environment and sustainable development](#); c) a report on ["Smart cities and regions – prospects for a human rights-based governance approach"](#); d) a report on ["Hate speech and fake news: the impact on working conditions of local and regional elected representatives"](#). Mr Benitez then referred to the Congress' support to effective multi-level governance with the adequate involvement of local municipalities; plans of the Congress' Monitoring Committee to reinforce the post monitoring and post electoral dialogue; work and debates under way regarding a contribution to the Fourth Summit, the Russian war against Ukraine, the subject of sustainable development goals and resilience of cities and regions faced with multiple crisis.

At the closure of this item, the Chair thanked the speakers.

4. Consideration and adoption of draft documents on the principles of good democratic governance (specific task 1 of the CDDG's terms of reference)

Mr Peter Andre, Chair of the GT-BG, presented the working group's work since the 15th plenary meeting as it appears in the reports of the group's 2nd meeting held in June and the 3rd meeting held in September (documents [GT-BG\(2022\)7](#) and [GT-BG\(2022\)10](#)). Mr Rowsell underlined that the Bureau had considered that the draft Recommendation on the principles of good democratic governance (document [CDDG\(2022\)10](#)) was ready for adoption in principle and that the draft explanatory memorandum (document [CDDG\(2022\)11](#)) needed further consideration and work. This could be done by the new working group on governance at an early meeting in 2023 and Mr Rowsell gave further details on this. Both texts would therefore undergo formal adoption together, as a package, by the CDDG at its 17th meeting. It may be that when it is sent to GR-DEM after adoption by the CDDG in April, reference is made to "this is subject to any amendments to be made in the light of any conclusions of the Fourth Summit".

The Committee agreed to this approach and following a brief discussion on the drafting process, it adopted in principle the draft Recommendation. Following a suggestion by the member of Norway, the explanatory memorandum would clarify that the concept of "public institutions" in the recommended action "Evaluate, as appropriate, the extent to which public institutions implement this recommendation" included also government bodies (especially as the definition of this expression in the first part of the appendix excluded member States' government).

The CDDG then considered the explanatory memorandum after the Chair had presented its general structure and recalled its purpose. The gender equality rapporteurs, Mr Edwin Lefebre and Ms Siobhan Smyth stressed that they would review the text from a gender mainstreaming perspective and inclusive language, in time for its final approval in 2023. During the discussion, it was suggested that in the table underneath paragraph 44 the expression "publicly coproduced with relevant stakeholders" was raising too many questions and could be taken out (this would be brought to the attention of the working group). Delegations also referred to paragraph 24 as the place to explain what "government" meant (the ministers or also the ministries and related structures), which structures were to be evaluated and how broad the evaluation should be (without implying redundancies with international and other evaluations and monitoring work) and that "public institutions" included private sector entities only when performing tasks in the public interest. Members expressed a preference for all reference texts featuring in the appendix only. The explanatory memorandum would also need to make clear that "national languages" (in relation to the need for member States to translate the future Recommendation) was equivalent to "official languages".

The CDDG agreed that the draft recommendation, as revised along the above lines, would be considered by the new working group and then the Bureau, and delegations were invited to submit any further drafting suggestions in writing by the end of the year.

5. Consideration and adoption of draft documents on deliberative democracy (specific task 2 of the CDDG's terms of reference)

Mr Markku Mölläri, Vice-Chair of the Working Group on Deliberative Democracy (GT-DD) presented the reports of the 2nd and 3rd meetings ([GT-DD\(2022\)9](#)) and ([GT-DD\(2022\)12](#)), and referred to the two documents for consideration, the report on deliberative democracy and the draft recommendation on the same subject, prepared to provide guidance to ensure successful deliberations where a country or public authority decides to use such mechanisms.

During consideration of the former, it was suggested to also address the question of disinformation, the potentially negative impact of social media and how to ensure the quality of information that is provided to participants. The report was amended accordingly, the CDDG subsequently adopted it and entrusted the Secretariat to submit it to the GR-DEM.

As for the draft recommendation on deliberative democracy, the Secretariat provided an overview of the results of the public consultation. 19 submissions had been received and comments addressed, among others, the scope of deliberation, fair representation and accountability, the relation between deliberative processes and the principles of democratic representation. The Committee took note of the information and decided to extend deadline for comments to 15 December. It entrusted the GT-DD with finalising the draft recommendation on deliberative democracy with a view to its adoption at the 17th plenary meeting.

6. Promoting democratic governance through shared experience

6.1 Exchange of views with members of government on current pertinent developments

The Committee heard an update (provided on-line) by **Mr Viacheslav Nehoda, Deputy Minister for Communities and Territorial Development of Ukraine**, about the impact of war on local authorities. Reforms of local self-governance had been put on hold given the number of cities which were particularly affected by the attacks (Kharkiv, Mariupol, Bucha, Trostyanets). Local authorities faced a variety of challenges including the kidnapping of mayors, decreasing revenues and handling the situation of many internally displaced persons who required support. Regions under attack had to focus on the evacuation of civilians and supplying essential services and goods while regions located farther from the frontline mostly provided support to the former. Many methodological documents had been prepared on support from the central to the local authorities. Ukraine was now confronted with the particular challenge of the systematic destruction of its infrastructures by the Russian Federation, especially for electricity, which had a dramatic impact on the population. Mr Nehoda referred to the recent visit of a high level delegation to Strasbourg and the preparation of a new Action Plan for his country, and to the need for continued support from the Council of Europe. He also called for the continuation of

the project on the decentralisation reform in Ukraine launched before the war. In response to a delegation, he mentioned that on-line conferencing was used to a large extent, including to ensure the functioning of elected assemblies. The CDDG took note of the information and calls and reiterated its full support to Ukraine's reforms.

Ms Slavica Grkovska, Deputy President of the Government in charge of good governance policies of North Macedonia referred to current processes for the implementation of EU standards. Key priorities now included improvements in the areas of transparency in public decision-making, accountability and responsibilities, the quality of public services and professionalism of public officials, the system of careers (with career progression to be based on objective criteria), whilst work continued also in respect of integrity, digital transformation, and public sector efficiency. This lengthy process required continuity and thus a political consensus also across the duration of political mandates. Plans had been discussed for the creation of a public sector training academy and new capacity-building programmes, with a focus on good governance, and partnership with the Centre of Expertise would be timely.

Mr Vache Terteryan, Deputy Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure of Armenia referred to various on-going and new reforms implemented with the support of the Council of Europe. The process of amalgamation had allowed to reduce the number of communities and facilitated the decentralisation process. A new triennial programme for administrative territorial reforms would start in January 2023 to further implement reforms. Other reforms initiated recently concern the increase of transparency at local level and of citizen participation, the implementation of freedom of information legislation involving the use of on-line platforms to facilitate the publication of, and access to all sorts of information. These reforms are supported by the fifth Action Plan in the framework of Open Government Partnership (OGP) adopted by the government in October 2022. A lot of work had also been done in cooperation with the Centre of Expertise based on the implementation of the 12 Principles of Good Democratic Governance.

Ms Mzia Giorgobiani, Deputy Minister of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia referred to on-going work to obtain the EU candidate status and to the current implementation of various programmes concerning increased public sector accountability, local autonomy and decentralisation. Regarding the latter, it was based on the Decentralisation Strategy adopted for the years 2020-2025 together with an action plan for its implementation. The strategy was aiming at increasing municipal capacities generally, the development of municipal IT-based services, the supply of additional funding through fiscal decentralisation, the mobilisation of people and resources to develop economic activities and business in remote/mountainous areas. Echoing Mr Nehoda, Ms Giorgobiani referred to the situation of the 5 municipalities in the Georgian territories occupied by Russian troops since the war in 2008. Ms Giorgobiani referred to the importance of public engagement in decision-making processes (pilot projects were introduced such as "I participate" in 15 municipalities) and of intensifying inter-municipal cooperation. She also praised the existing cooperation with international partners. In response, the Centre of Expertise for Good Governance was ready to provide further support to Georgia and the Committee expressed full support for the reforms and offered assistance.

Ms Hon. Alison Zerafa Civelli, Parliamentary Secretary responsible for Local Government of Malta, provided an update on electoral reforms and referred to a project of consultation of the local authorities on strengthening local governance. The government was working on establishing a partnership with the business community so as to redistribute wealth domestically in the whole of Malta. Important efforts were deployed for the greening of local communities, especially villages, through the promotion of electric vehicles (cars, bicycles etc) and other initiatives. The second round of ELoGE had been launched in Malta this year. Participants sought additional information the average size of regions and local communities in Malta and the various levels of government.

The CDDG took note of the above information. As a general comment, Dan Popescu, Head of Democracy and Governance Department, observed that the five members of government had all underlined how the need for territorial and local government reforms was especially important and that a review of the modus operandi of the Centre of Expertise would be worth considering, for instance to be able to establish some sort of partnerships, as suggested by Ms Grkovska.

6.2 Reports by CDDG delegates on pertinent developments

The delegation of **Belgium** (Flanders), in relation to the upcoming CDDG work on greening policies, referred to current efforts in this field in the region of Flanders. Established in 2019 by the Flanders Regional Government and having entered force in 2020, the [Flemish Local Energy and Climate Pact](#) (LEKP) encompasses nearly 300 municipalities and revolves around four key pillars: 1) nature-based solutions, with a focus on urban greening; 2) mitigation policies, with a focus on energy efficiency; 3) mobility and development of shared, active, and sustainable solutions; 4) water management. These four pillars chart a pathway for Flanders – as a region and through each of its municipalities – to align with the 55% emissions reduction requirement set by the European Union and the Covenant of Mayors in Europe, as well as a 1.5°C trajectory. 18 measures have already been implemented, for instance the LEKP is aiming for one tree per inhabitant, 50 collective renovations per 1,000 housing units, one charging point per 100 inhabitants and one square metre of water softening per inhabitant.

The Flemish Climate Pact holds a stakeholders' climate dialogue every two years involving the cities, local governments, and citizens' organisations to co-design climate objectives and actions – facilitating broad inclusivity at a grassroots level. Dialogue is also backed by deeds: as part of the mitigation pillar, local governments have signed up to the Covenant of Mayors – Europe commitments for 2030 as the basis for climate and energy action.

Against the background of the CDDG's work on deliberative democracy, the delegate of **Finland** gave a PowerPoint presentation on existing relevant provisions in the Finish Local Government Act regarding the municipal level (another section provides for the same in respect of counties). These regulate opportunities to participate and exert influence (Section 22, detailed below), the right of initiative (Section 23), local referenda and referendum initiatives (Sections 24 and 25), Youth/elderly/disabled persons councils (Sections 26 to 28), communications (Section 29).

Section 22 - Opportunities to participate and exert influence

(1) **Municipal residents and service users shall have the right to participate in and influence the activities of the municipality. Local councils shall ensure that there are diverse and effective opportunities and methods for participation.**

(2) Participation and exerting influence can be furthered especially by:

1. **arranging opportunities for discussion and for views to be presented, and setting up local resident panels;**
2. **finding out the opinions of residents and service users** who are legal or long-term residents of the municipality before making decisions;
3. electing representatives of service users to municipal decision-making bodies;
4. **arranging opportunities to participate in the planning of the municipality's finances;**
5. **planning and developing services together with service users;**
6. **supporting independent planning and preparation of matters by residents, organisations and other corporate entities.**

He then made a brief comparison between the Finish provisions and the current version of the draft Recommendation on deliberative democracy prepared by the CDDG, pointing out areas where possible adjustments and improvements of the former could be made.

The **French** delegation provided an update on green initiatives in the country, giving an overview of the current distribution of responsibilities within the current multi-level governance set-up, with the State providing the general strategic orientations (for instance in relation to the recent post-Covid economic resilience plan which contained important environmental aspects), the regions with their important responsibilities in the field of bio-diversity, the coordination of local actors, funding and the implementation of regional development projects, and the intercommunal cooperation schemes (which had increasing tasks to implement – in comparison to the individual communes - with regard to transportation, housing, waste disposal). France had convened in 2019 a major citizen convention on climate, with 150 participants selected by lot who produced 149 proposals, 20% of which had been implemented. The delegation pointed out that the *Caisse des Dépôts* (a public development bank with 20 subsidiaries involved in various public asset management, lending, financing and other activities) was also a useful tool to support the emergence of green projects.

The delegation of the **United Kingdom** provided an update on the current devolution process in the country. Following the publication of a White Paper, every region should have a devolution deal with the State by 2030 which would be tailor-made along the list of core principles contained in the Paper. It also referred to the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill, which was now in Parliament for adoption, and which addresses a number of initiatives and areas: the setting of levelling-up missions and reporting on progress in delivering them; local democracy; town and country planning; special levies for community infrastructures etc; environmental outcome reports for certain consents and plans; regeneration; the compulsory purchase of land; information and records relating to land etc. Working is also on-going on a reform aimed to foster the county level as the tiers responsible for a number of tasks (for England only). Reference was also made to a recent important Supreme Court decision according to which the Scottish Government and Parliament can legislate (e.g. in relation to a Referendum) only with the UK's concurring agreement.

6.3 Presentation on Report on Global State of Democracy 2022 and other relevant information, and exchange of views

Mr Sam Van der Staak, Head of Europe Programme, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) on IDEA's gave a presentation on the soon to be released [Report on the Global State of Democracy 2022](#), some of its findings and the methodology used for those annual reports. This year's edition was confirming the increase of the phenomenon of eroding democracies and growing public support for authoritarian values at the global level but also in Europe even though the continent retained the largest number of democratic regimes and autocracies were still on the decline. In International IDEA's view, the way forward would involve action to rebuild public trust, to develop inclusion (addressing group marginalisation), to increase youth participation and to implement innovative participation mechanisms. Participants then sought clarification and specific views on the fundamental reasons for the current situation, the methodology used for these periodic reports, the media's role, how to take into account the significance of the corporate sector etc.

6.4 Rapid Response Service (RRS): current state of play; Public sector reforms and trends in Europe: a snapshot

The Secretariat provided an update on the use of the CDDG's [Rapid Response Service - RRS](#), which had prompted since 2014 up until now the circulation of 51 requests for information from other members on a variety of subjects. It recalled the steps which had been taken to facilitate access by all members to responses collected in respect of earlier questionnaires. A presentation of preliminary results from a study of potentially general interest to all CDDG members and conducted by the Kehl University (Germany) of applied Sciences on "Practical examples of administrative modernisation at the macro level of European countries" (RRS n°48), initially scheduled for the present meeting, needed to be postponed to the next meeting. This could also give additional time for countries interested to send responses to questionnaire n°48.

7. CDDG activities: state of play in 2022 and workplan for 2023

The Secretariat presented a summary of on-going work in 2022 and a possible workplan for CDDG activities in 2023 taking into account tasks to be completed and new tasks to be addressed in the coming year, according to the terms of reference and following the last Bureau meeting discussions (document [\[CDDG\(2022\)15\]](#)).

The Committee noted with satisfaction that the specific tasks 1 and 2 of the CDDG's terms of reference, due for completion by the end of 2023 (draft recommendation on principles of good democratic governance and draft report and recommendation on deliberative democracy) were thus on the right track and could be forwarded to the Committee of Ministers well before the deadline.

The CDDG considered a workplan for 2023. It agreed to create two new working groups to deal with task 3 (report on green public administration) and task 5 combined with task 6 (draft recommendation on multilevel governance - including in response to emergencies) and approved their terms of reference (document [CDDG\(2022\)18](#)). Countries interested were also invited to propose by 18 December 2022 nominations of experts with the expected background for the future Working Group on Green Public Administration (GT-A) and future Working Group on Governance (GT-G).

In the light of these nominations, the Bureau with the assistance of the Secretariat would prepare a list of those working group members whose costs would be borne by the Council of Europe, for approval by the CDDG by written procedure: seven country experts for the GT-A and eight country experts for the GT-G.

The Committee also examined the provisional calendar of meetings presented by the Secretariat and approved the document in its general lines. In particular:

- the GT-DD would hold an additional meeting online in the beginning of 2023 to take stock of the results of the public consultation on the draft Recommendation on deliberative democracy and to amend the draft as necessary (see also item 5 above); the newly created GT-G would first deal with the remainder of work from the GT-BG regarding the finalisation of the explanatory memorandum to the draft Recommendation on the principles of good democratic governance.
- as the Icelandic authorities had agreed that a conference on green public administration be held under the aegis of their Presidency of the Committee of Ministers (see item 3 above), the CDDG decided that the event would be held in Strasbourg on 26 April 2023 in a hybrid format, just before the 17th meeting. The CDDG also considered the outline for the organisation of such a conference (document ([\[CDDG\(2022\)17\]](#)), which should involve some high level representatives during a dedicated session, as well as policy-makers directly involved in the design and implementation of relevant policies in this field. The Chair invited members to come forward, by the end of February 2023, with suggestions of speakers from the national or infra-national level with relevant expertise in the fields covered by the conference. The CDDG took note of this call;

- the CDDG agreed to carrying out a review of implementation of Recommendation on standards for e-voting (it would be third one) and of the Guidelines on the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in the electoral process. A dedicated event would be held for that purpose on 16 June 2023, and other relevant Council of Europe bodies and partner organisations would be invited given the specificities of the subjects of elections and ICTs in that context. The Committee approved a general outline for that event (document [\[CDDG\(2022\)16\]](#)), notably the use of a hybrid format and the circulation of a questionnaire to collect relevant information prior to the event.

The CDDG also took note of information concerning plans of the forthcoming Latvian Presidency of the Committee of Ministers to hold an international conference on ELoGE in May 2023 in Riga.

8. Centre of Expertise for Good Governance (CEGG)

The Secretariat of the CEGG gave an update on activities of the [Centre of Expertise for Good Governance](#) (CEGG), including ongoing projects in Armenia, Serbia, the Slovak Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, and Ukraine, as well as new cooperation projects with Albania, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Finland and Hungary. Overall, capacity-building activities were being implemented with 17 member States. Reference was made to various legal and policy advice papers and a series of five online conferences held under the banner “Local Governments Unite for Welfare and Peace” which had attracted over 1000 participants from 35 countries to promote cooperation with, and among local authorities in Ukraine and beyond. Two Peer Reviews had recently been conducted in Serbia (on human resource management and the competency framework for local officials) and Lithuania (on territorial / regional development strategies, including cross-border and inter-regional dimensions) and a new toolkit explaining the Peer Review Process had been published on the CEGG’s website.

Overall, 23 capacity building [toolkits](#) were now available to member States, including two newly updated ones on Human Resource Management and Strategic Municipal Planning. Committee members were encouraged to disseminate the toolkits to interested public authorities in their countries and to come forward with proposals of experts to participate in particular in peer reviews. Concerning the [European Label of Governance Excellence](#) (ELoGE), it was currently being implemented in 15 member States and Kosovo*. Revised benchmarks and ELoGE regulations would be presented to the CDDG at its next meeting in April 2023.

The CDDG took note of the above information.

* All references to Kosovo, whether the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations' Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

9. Activities of the Committee of Ministers and other Council of Europe bodies

9.1. The Secretariat of the **Committee on Artificial Intelligence (CAI)** updated the CDDG on on-going work on a possible framework convention in this field, which would address the development, design, and application of artificial intelligence systems, based on the Council of Europe acquis on human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The Convention aimed at ensuring that AI would not be used to undermine democratic processes and institutions. At the same time, it was envisioned that specific aspects of democracy could be further elaborated in sectoral instruments. Reference was made to the agenda of work (involving 5 meetings in 2023) for the completion of this task by the end of November 2023, the establishment of a drafting group, the large number of participants and particular interest from observer States, the elaboration of a "human rights, democracy and rule of law impact assessment" (HUDERIA) to be discussed at the next plenary in January, the regular meetings of a dedicated coordination group on artificial intelligence bringing together various Council of Europe committees and bodies concerned by the subject. During the subsequent exchange, CDDG members inquired how the Committee could contribute further to the CAI's work and the CAI Secretariat expressed appreciation for the active role of the rapporteur on democracy and technology. The CDDG members could share the current preliminary version of the draft Convention within their relevant ministries, in line with its classification as "restricted". The CDDG reiterated its continued support to CAI's work and agreed that the Chair or a member of the CAI be invited for an exchange of views at the next CDDG meeting in April 2023.

9.2. The Secretariat of the **Division of elections and participatory democracy** informed the Committee on the new Council of Europe [portal on elections](#) which was providing to policy-makers and all those interested in the subject a single entry point to all Council of Europe resources and activities concerned. The Secretariat also gave a presentation on the new [BePART Forum](#) - a joint initiative of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, the Conference of INGOs and the Directorate General of Democracy and Human Dignity - which provides an interactive platform to promote civil participation in decision-making processes and a listing of initiatives in member States.

9.3. The Secretariat of the **World Forum for Democracy (WFD)** briefed the CDDG about outcomes of the recent 10th edition of the WFD "Democracy: a new hope?" held in Strasbourg on 7-9 November 2022. In his summary, the WFD General Rapporteur had highlighted how debates had identified the importance of diversity, technology, education and political reforms as particular challenges to be addressed by democratic systems. This year's edition, which had benefited from increased presence on social media, showed that people do care about democracy. Participants, especially youth delegates, had called for additional time to be devoted to future debates and exchanges and increasing the focus on future-oriented and concrete actions. The CDDG would be invited to support the organising team of the WFD, once the theme of the next edition is determined. The CDDG-sponsored Forum Talk on deliberative democracy was a good model for future contributions of the CDDG.

The CDDG took note of the above information.

9.4. Information on the Advisory Council on Youth (CCJ): this item was postponed to a next CDDG meeting.

9.5. The Secretariat gave a general overview of **further developments since the 15th meeting**, as compiled in information document [CDDG\(2022\)23](#). It was likely that the Committee of Ministers would soon solicit comments from the CDDG on the following recent Congress recommendations, with a possible deadline of 1st of February 2023 (in which case the CDDG would need to use the written procedure):

- Recommendation 478 (2022) – “Hate speech and fake news: the impact on working conditions of local and regional elected representatives”;
- Recommendation 480 (2022) – “Smart cities and regions – prospects for a human rights-based governance approach”;
- Recommendation 483 (2022) – “Regional identities: promoting dialogue and diversity in unity”;
- Recommendation 484 (2022) – “A fundamental right to the environment: a matter for local and regional authorities – towards a green reading of the European Charter of Local Self-government”;

The committee took note of the above information.

10. Elections

The CDDG re-elected by acclamation, in the absence of further candidates, the following outgoing candidates: as Chair: Mr Paul ROWSELL (United Kingdom); as Vice-Chair: Mr Edwin LEFEBRE (Flanders, Belgium); as Bureau member: Mr Georgios CHRYSAFIS (Greece), all for a one-year term.

11. Other business

None

12. and 13. Date of the next meeting; adoption of the abridged report

The CDDG agreed that its 17th meeting be held, in person, on 27-28 April 2023. It also considered and adopted the draft abridged report of the 16th meeting. At the closure of discussions, the Chair thanked all participants for the fruitful exchanges, the Secretariat and interpreters.

APPENDIX 1

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

MEMBERS / MEMBRES

CHAIR / PRESIDENT

Mr Paul ROWSELL, Head of Governance Reform and Democracy Unit, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Local Government & Communities Directorate, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, LONDON

ALBANIA / ALBANIE

Apologised for absence / Excusé

ARMENIA / ARMENIE

Mr Vache TERTERYAN, Deputy Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure, YEREVAN

Ms Armine HOVHANNISYAN, Deputy to the Permanent Representative of Armenia

AUSTRIA / AUTRICHE

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

AZERBAIJAN / AZERBAÏDJAN

Mr Vugar ALIYEV, Head Adviser of the Foreign Policy Department of the Presidential Administration of the Republic of Azerbaijan

BELGIUM / BELGIQUE

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

M. Xavier KALBUSCH, Ministerium der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft, Gospert 1, 4700 EUPEN

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA / BOSNIE-HERZEGOVINE

Ambassador Almir ŠAHOVIĆ, Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo

BULGARIA / BULGARIE

Mr Valery NAYDENOV, Head of Department "Administrative territorial structure", Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works, SOFIA, Bulgaria

Mr Mihail VASILEV, State expert, Directorate "Spatial Development and Administrative-territorial Structure", Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works, SOFIA

CROATIA / CROATIE

Ms Leda LEPRI, Senior Advisor – Specialist, Ministry of Justice and Public Administration

CYPRUS / CHYPRE

Mr Antonis ECONOMIDES, District Officer, Head of Local Government Directorate, Ministry of the Interior, NICOSIA

CZECH REPUBLIC / REPUBLIQUE TCHEQUE

Mr Petr FEJTEK, Senior Administrative Advisor, Department for Strategic Development and Coordination of Public Administration, Ministry of Interior of the Czech Republic, PRAHA

DENMARK / DANEMARK

Mr Mads HOLT, Special Advisor, Department of Public Administrative Law, Ministry of the Interior and Housing, COPENHAGEN

ESTONIA / ESTONIE

Mr Mart UUSJÄRV, Head of Local Governance Department, The Ministry of Finance

FINLAND / FINLANDE

Mr Markku MÖLLÄRI, Ministerial adviser, Department for Local Affairs and Regional Administration, Ministry of Finance, HELSINKI

FRANCE

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Mr Natalino ATTARD, Director General (Local Government), Local Government Division, Ministry for Justice, Culture and Local Government, VALLETTA

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Ms Victoria CUJBA, Head of Department, State Chancellery

Ms Daniela SORAHMETOV, Main consultant of the Public Administration, State Chancellery

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PORTUGAL

Apologised for absence / Excusé

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UKRAINE

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Mr Ruslan POPIUK, Acting Head of the Expert Group for Interaction with the Council of Europe Institutions of the Directorate for the Development of Local Self-Government, Territorial Organization of Power and Administrative-Territorial Structure, Ministry for Communities and Territories Development of Ukraine

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Mr Thorvardur THORSSON, Deputy Permanent Representative of Iceland to the Council of Europe

CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE / CONGRES DES POUVOIRS LOCAUX ET REGIONAUX DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Mr Raphael BENITEZ, Director of the Congress

Mr Roman CHLAPAK, Secretary of the Governance Committee

CONFERENCE OF INGOS OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE / CONFERENCE DES OING DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Mr Christoph SPRENG, Representative of the INGOs Conference to the CDDG, Initiatives of Change-International

OTHER PARTICIPANTS / AUTRES PARTICIPANTS

HOLY SEE / SAINT-SIEGE

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Mr Luc-Emile BOUCHE-FLORIN, Honorary President of the European Council of Spatial Planners, Versailles, France

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Apologised for absence / Excusé

GUEST SPEAKERS / INTERVENANTS

Mr Sam VAN DER STAACK, Head of Europe Programme, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA)

Ms Nana KALANDADZE, Senior Programme Officer for Eastern Europe, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA)

Ms Tatyana HILSCHER-BOGUSSEVICH, Senior Programme Officer, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA)

SECRETARIAT

Secretariat of the CDDG / Secrétariat du CDDG

Ms Alina TATARENKO – Head of the Democratic Governance Division / Secretary of the CDDG / Directorate of Human Dignity, Equality and Governance / Directorate General of Democracy and Human Dignity

Mr Christophe SPECKBACHER, Administrator – Democratic Governance Division / Directorate of Human Dignity, Equality and Governance / Directorate General of Democracy and Human Dignity

Ms Judith ORLAND, Democratic Governance Division – Directorate of Human Dignity, Equality and Governance - Directorate General of Democracy and Human Dignity

Ms Isabelle ETTER, Assistant

Other Secretariat participating in the meeting / Autre Secrétariat participant à la réunion

Ms Claudia LUCIANI, Director of Human Dignity, Equality and Governance / Directorate General of Democracy and Human Dignity

Mr Daniel POPESCU, Head of Democracy and Governance Department / Directorate of Human Dignity, Equality and Governance / Directorate General of Democracy and Human Dignity

Ms Mary Ann HENNESSEY, Head of the Democratic Innovation Division / Directorate of Human Dignity, Equality and Governance / Directorate General of Democracy and Human Dignity

Mr Markus ADELSBACH, Head of the Elections and Participatory Democracy Division / Directorate of Human Dignity, Equality and Governance / Directorate General of Democracy and Human Dignity

Mr Franck DAESCHLER, Elections and Participatory Democracy Division / Directorate of Human Dignity, Equality and Governance / Directorate General of Democracy and Human Dignity

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Interpreters / Interprètes

Ms Remy JAIN

Ms Amanda BEDDOWS-LARIVIERE

Ms Katia DI STEFANO

APPENDIX 2

AGENDA

1.	<p>Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Message of the Chair of the CDDG to all delegations 	<p>[CDDG(2022)OJ2]</p> <p>Link to the message</p>
2.	<p>Information on recent activities and developments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bureau meeting of 13-14 October: report by the Chair • Information by the Secretariat 	<p>[CDDG-Bu(2022)14]</p>
3.	<p>Exchange of views on recent developments, including the Report of the High-Level Reflection Group of the Council of Europe</p> <p><u>For information and discussion</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms Claudia LUCIANI, Director of Human Dignity, Equality and Governance • Ambassador Ragnhildur ARNLJÓTSDÓTTIR, Chair of the Ministers' Deputies, Permanent Representative of Iceland to the Council of Europe • Ambassador Svetlana GELEVA, Chair of the GR-DEM (Rapporteur Group of the Ministers' Deputies on Democracy), Permanent Representative of North Macedonia to the Council of Europe • Mr Rafael BENITEZ, Director of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities 	<p>[CDDG(2022)9]</p> <p>Link to the Report</p>
4.	<p>Consideration and adoption of draft documents on the principles of good democratic governance (specific task 1 of the CDDG's terms of reference)</p> <p><u>For information</u></p> <p>4.1 Recent work and meetings of the GT-BG: information by the Chair of the Working Group and the Secretariat</p> <p><u>For discussion and decision</u></p> <p>4.2 Consideration of a draft Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers</p> <p>4.3 Consideration of a draft Explanatory Memorandum to the Recommendation</p>	<p>[GT-BG(2022)7]</p> <p>[GT-BG(2022)10]</p> <p>[CDDG(2022)10]</p> <p>[CDDG(2022)11]</p>

<p>5.</p>	<p>Consideration and adoption of draft documents on deliberative democracy (specific task 2 of the CDDG's terms of reference)</p> <p><u>For information</u></p> <p>5.1 Recent work and meetings of the GT-DD: information by the Chair of the Working Group and the Secretariat</p> <p><u>For discussion and decision</u></p> <p>5.2 Consideration, with a view to adoption, of a draft Report on Deliberative Democracy</p> <p>5.3 Preliminary results of the public consultation on the draft Recommendation on Deliberative Democracy</p> <p>5.4 Consideration of the draft Recommendation on Deliberative Democracy</p>	<p>[GT-DD(2022)9]</p> <p>[GT-DD(2022)12]</p> <p>[CDDG(2022)12]</p> <p>[CDDG(2022)14]</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Promoting democratic governance through shared experience</p> <p><u>For information and discussion</u></p> <p>6.1 Exchange of views with members of government on current pertinent developments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Viacheslav NEHODA, Deputy Minister for Communities and Territories Development of Ukraine (online) • Ms Slavica GRKOVSKA, Deputy President of the Government in charge of good governance policies of North Macedonia • Mr Vache TERTERYAN, Deputy Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure of Armenia • Ms Mzia GIORGOBANI, Deputy Minister of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia • Ms Hon. Alison ZERAFA CIVELLI, Parliamentary Secretary responsible for Local Government, Malta <p>6.2 Reports by the CDDG delegates on pertinent developments, (Belgium, Finland, France, United Kingdom – full list tbc)</p> <p>6.3 Presentation on Report on Global State of Democracy 2022 and other relevant information, and exchange of views: M. Sam VAN DER STAAK, Head of Europe Programme, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA)</p> <p>6.4 Rapid Response Service (RRS): current state of play; Public sector reforms and trends in Europe: a snapshot</p>	<p>Link to RRS</p>

7.	<p>CDDG – state of play in 2022 and workplan for 2023</p> <p><u>For discussion and decision</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State of play in 2022 and agenda of activities for 2023 • Preparation of a review of implementation of the Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)5 on standards for e-voting • Conference on green public administration, under the aegis of the Icelandic Presidency of the Committee of Ministers (tbc) • Creation of new working groups 	<p>[CDDG(2022)15] [CDDG(2022)16]</p> <p>[CDDG(2022)17] [CDDG(2022)18]</p>
8.	<p>Centre of Expertise for Good Governance: on-going and new cooperation projects - update by the Secretariat</p> <p><u>For information</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEGG Annual Report 2022 • European Label of Governance Excellence (ELoGE) 	<p>[CDDG(2022)19] [CDDG(2022)20]</p>
9.	<p>Activities of other Council of Europe bodies</p> <p><u>For information and discussion</u></p> <p>9.1 Artificial intelligence: exchange of views on the work of the Committee on artificial Intelligence (CAI) with Mr Kristian Bartholin, Secretary of the CAI</p> <p>9.2 Division of elections and participatory democracy: information by the Secretariat; including a presentation of the new Council of Europe portal on elections and the BePART Forum</p> <p>9.3 World Forum for Democracy (7-9 November 2022): information by the Secretariat and presentation of draft conclusions</p> <p>9.4 Information on the Advisory Council on Youth (CCJ): Ms Joanne Hunting, Secretary of the CCJ</p> <p>9.5 General overview of developments since the 15th meeting: information by the Secretariat</p>	<p>[CDDG(2022)23]</p>
10.	<p>Elections</p> <p><u>For decision</u></p> <p>Election of the Chair, Vice-Chair and one Bureau member Presentation of candidates</p>	<p>[CDDG(2022)21] [CDDG(2022)22]</p>
11.	<p>Other business</p>	
12.	<p>Date of the next meeting. Proposed date: 27-28 April 2023</p> <p><u>For decision</u></p>	
13.	<p>Adoption of the abridged report</p> <p><u>For decision</u></p>	<p>[CDDG(2022)24]</p>