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EUROPEAN COMMITTEE ON DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE (CDDG)

STATE OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CDDG ACTIVITIES ACCORDING TO ITS TERMS OF REFERENCE 2022-2025

The CDDG is invited to take note of the information below and use it as a basis for a discussion under item 4 of the agenda, on the progress that was achieved.

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

Introduction

The present document provides an overview on the state of implementation of the main and specific tasks of the European Committee on Democracy and Governance (CDDG) in 2022-2023.

After the previous biennium (2020-2021) which saw the vast majority of meetings being held on-line or in a hybrid format, the situation has returned to normal with the use of in-person meetings which allow for better working conditions and input. In accordance with the incentives to use IT tools¹, the CDDG has continued to use remote participation for informal online and hybrid meetings. The inflation of hotel costs in Paris has forced the Bureau to put an end to any meetings in the capital city.

The present biennium was marked by the full-scale military assault of the Russian Federation on Ukraine, and the CDDG published on its website a public statement reminding that good democratic governance was a key to the maintenance of peace and security. Also, following the 4th summit of Heads of State and Governments (Reykjavik, 16-17 May 2023), new terms of reference for the intergovernmental committees have been prepared for 2024-2027.

By the end of 2023, the CDDG completed most of its general tasks and five of its eight main deliverables.

It should be mentioned that several other bodies have contributed to the implementation of these tasks and deliverables, including:

- the Centre of Expertise for Good Governance, in particular in relation to the European Label of Governance Excellence – ELoGE and peer reviews which are both implemented in cooperation between the CDDG and the CEGG,
- the Division of Elections and Participatory Democracy as well as the Venice Commission, with regard to the review of the implementation of CM/Rec (2017)5,
- the Congress, the Parliamentary Assembly and the Conference of INGOs as regular participants in CDDG activities, but also bodies external to the Council of Europe, which all have provided valuable input in relation to the preparation of new texts and the sharing of experience on a variety of subject-matters.

¹ See [Resolution CM/Res\(2021\)3 on intergovernmental committees and subordinate bodies, their terms of reference and working methods](#)

STATE OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CDDG ACTIVITIES ACCORDING TO ITS TERMS OF REFERENCE 2020-2021

MAIN TASKS

Under the authority of the Committee of Ministers, having regard to the Secretary General's reports on the State of Democracy, Human Rights and the Rule of Law, and building on the achievements in the area of local and regional democracy and multilevel governance, the CDDG will steer the Council of Europe's intergovernmental work in the field of democracy and democratic governance and advise the Committee of Ministers in its field of competence. The overall aim of the CDDG is to contribute to strengthening democratic institutions, and good governance at all levels of government, with particular emphasis on structural institutional reforms at all levels and enhancing citizens' participation in political decision-making with a view also to strengthen their interaction with and trust in public institutions. In carrying out these tasks, the CDDG shall address emerging challenges such as harnessing the benefits of digital transformation on democracy and governance while tackling its risks, promoting the environmental sustainability of public action, and ensuring that the response to the Covid-19 pandemic and its aftermath is in line with fundamental principles of good democratic governance. In particular, the CDDG is instructed to:

General tasks	State of implementation in 2022-2023
<p>(i) ensure the follow-up of the relevant decisions taken at the 131st Session of the Committee of Ministers (Hamburg, 21 May 2021) (...) and in particular contribute to the implementation of the key strategic priorities relating to its specific field of expertise as identified in the Strategic Framework of the Council of Europe, and respond to the respective key findings and challenges set out in the Secretary General's 2021 Report on the state of democracy, human rights and rule of law "A democratic renewal for Europe";</p>	<p>With regard to the enhancement of the role of the CoE and cooperation with international partners: the CDDG has increased its outreach with a variety of actors dealing with democracy and governance. It engaged with the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES); the European Partnership for Democracy (EPD) the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), and the Economist Intelligence Unit, on current priorities, working areas of common interest and opportunities for cooperation.</p> <p>The findings contained in the Secretary General's 2021 Report, especially in what concerns the democratic backsliding, but also those for the years 2022 and 2023, were reflected in the CDDG's work every time possible.</p> <p>This concerns especially the preparation of Recommendation CM/Rec(2023)5 on the principles of good democratic governance (adopted in September 2023).</p>

<p>(ii) contribute to the Council of Europe work on digitalisation and artificial intelligence in relation to democracy and governance</p>	<p>A representative of the Committee on Artificial Intelligence (CAI) is invited on a regular basis to the CDDG meetings to inform it about the state of progress and for it to comment on the content of the draft framework convention on artificial intelligence. The CDDG and its rapporteur on new technologies and democracy have responded in 2022-2023 to all requests for input from the CAI and many suggestions were sent to reinforce the inclusion of the subject of democracy and governance in the draft convention.</p>
<p>(iii) develop standards relating to democracy and governance, including on the modernisation of democratic institutions, public administration reforms, decentralisation, citizens' participation and democratic governance, at local, regional and/or national level;</p>	<p>The CDDG has produced in 2022-2023 – as per the main deliverables listed in its terms of reference, reports and legal instruments (recommendations of the Committee of Ministers) on such subjects as the use of information and communication technology in electoral processes, principles of good democratic governance, deliberative democracy, green public administration, and multilevel governance.</p>
<p>(iv) promote exchange of information, views and experience and disseminate good practice in the design and implementation of reforms in the area of democracy and governance, including at local and regional levels and on transfrontier-cooperation within the remit of the Madrid Convention, acting as a forum for member States, participants and observers, by compiling best practice and drafting handbooks and guidelines;</p>	<p>Exchanges of information, experience and best practices take place ongoingly as they are a standard item on every CDDG plenary meeting agenda. Moreover, exchanges of views with members of government are a regular feature of meeting agendas, especially regarding project countries benefiting from cooperation activities implemented by Centre of Expertise.</p> <p>See (iii) above regarding the CDDG. The documents and standards produced (sometimes supported by compilations of responses to questionnaires) provide valuable information and good practices.</p> <p>The Centre of Expertise has produced several new and revised toolkits, such as the new ELoGE Benchmark, the new tool on strategic planning at regional level, and an updated tool on human resource management.</p>

<p>(v) provide information on domestic legislation, policy and practice in the area of democracy and governance to member States so requesting, including through peer reviews and the rapid response service (RRS);</p>	<p>Peer reviews with the participation of CDDG experts were organised by the Centre of Expertise (CEGG) in a dozen of member states. All peer reviews resulted in policy recommendations, and sometimes legislative improvements.</p> <p>Eight requests (five in 2022, four in 2023) have been made by countries and answered through the Rapid Response Service (RRS); the responses provided valuable experience from counterparts to the requesting countries for the design of various reforms and measures have been taken in previous years to make the information collected more easily accessible to any member State interested.</p>
<p>(vi) promote the implementation of the 12 Principles of Good Democratic Governance throughout its work and by providing guidance to and input into the activities of the Centre of Expertise for Good Governance;</p>	<p>The 12 Principles of Good Democratic Governance continued in 2022-2023 to be constantly referred to in all the documents of the CDDG and they are the basis for the toolkits and benchmarks of the Centre of Expertise. The principles will be further promoted through follow-up activities to the recent Recommendation CM/Rec(2023)5 on the principles of good democratic governance (applicable to all levels of government) which have built on these former “12 Principles” applicable to the local level. The CEGG has been presenting an annual activity report and regular updates on its activities to the CDDG Bureau and plenary meetings. CDDG members actively participate in the CEGG projects, thus helping to promote and implement relevant standards and toolkits.</p>
<p>(vii) participate in the European Stakeholders’ Platform which delivers the accreditation to the entities authorised to grant the European Label of Governance Excellence (ELoGE) and report to the Committee of Ministers on the implementation of ELoGE on a regular basis;</p>	<p>The CDDG Bureau, together with CINGO representatives and other participants from the Congress and PACE, are the ELoGE Accreditation Platform (formerly Stakeholders’ Platform). The Platform held 1 meeting in 2022 and 2 in 2023. In 2023, an ELoGE Ceremony for the French municipalities was organised at the Council of Europe with the participation of the Accreditation Platform members.</p>
<p>(viii) provide guidance to and input into the co-operation activities aimed at enhancing civil participation and providing support to member States in the electoral field;</p>	<p>Representatives of the Division of elections and participatory democracy, who are responsible for these activities, participate regularly in meetings or relevant activities of the CDDG, such as in the preparation of the Report and the Recommendation on Deliberative Democracy and the review of the implementation of the Recommendation on e-voting. They also present their activities and participate in an exchange of views annually with the CDDG.</p>

<p>(ix) provide input and ensure follow-up to the sessions of the Council of Europe's World Forum for Democracy when the themes addressed fall within the mandate of the CDDG;</p>	<p>The CDDG is regularly briefed about the preparation of the WFD and through its Secretariat, input is provided to the editions of the WFD.</p> <p>The CDDG contributed to the 2022 edition of the WFD with a forum talk on "Deliberation: a Booster for Democracy?" and is contributing to the 2023 edition with a forum talk on "Building Peace and Democracy across Borders"</p>
<p>(x) without prejudice to the mandates of intergovernmental committees of the Council of Europe that already follow the work of monitoring mechanisms, follow the activities of the relevant monitoring and other bodies;</p>	<p>The CDDG is regularly requested to comment on recommendations and resolutions of other Council of Europe bodies and it follows the activities of other bodies working in the area of democracy and governance. The Secretariat informs regularly the CDDG of any relevant in-house activity or document, especially the Secretary General, the Committee of Ministers, the Parliamentary Assembly, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, the Conference of INGOs, the Venice Commission. Exchanges of views are organised regularly with representatives of these bodies.</p>
<p>(xi) promote and follow the implementation of the non-binding instruments that it has prepared;</p>	<p>The CDDG promotes the implementation of the non-binding instruments it has prepared through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - regular reference is made to earlier recommendations and reports it has prepared, e.g. the recently adopted Recommendation CM/Rec (2023)5 on the principles of good democratic governance (which also contains a list of all relevant texts elaborated by the CDDG and its predecessor, the CDLR together with other important reference material produced by other CoE bodies) - the CEGG projects which provide policy advice and capacity building to help implement the recommendations. - Given the particular political importance of Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)5 on e-voting, the CDDG held a review of its implementation at a conference on 16 June 2023 (organised together with the Division of elections and participatory democracy, and the Venice Commission). The results are to be examined at the 18th plenary meeting.
<p>(xii) hold an exchange of views annually in order to evaluate its activities and advise the Committee of Ministers and the Secretary General on future priorities in its sector, including possible new activities and those that might be discontinued;</p>	<p>This exchange of views is held at the end of each year so as to provide feedback to the Committee of Ministers (GR-DEM) on its activities.</p>

<p>(xiii) take due account of the following mainstreamed perspectives in the performance of its tasks: gender, youth, children's rights, rights of persons with disabilities, and of Roma and Traveller issues;</p>	<p>Rapporteurs on gender equality and on social matters including rights of persons with disabilities have been appointed i.a. to ensure liaison with other relevant CoE activities and bodies, and to review any draft document also from the perspective of gender equality and social inclusion. They make regular suggestions in relation to the CDDG's work. See also item xiv below.</p>
<p>(xiv) where relevant, contribute to building cohesive societies and to strengthening the role and meaningful participation of civil society in its work;</p>	<p>The important role and participation of civil society are taken into account through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the active and ongoing participation of the representatives of CINGO in all activities of the CDDG, its working groups, the ELoGE platform (the composition of which includes up to two representatives with voting rights); - the terms of reference of the CDDG and dedicated activities – see especially the work on deliberative and participatory democracy; - the mainstreaming of social cohesion and civil participation in all the work as these subjects are also a cornerstone of good democratic governance.
<p>(xv) in accordance with decisions CM/Del/Dec(2013)1168/1 0.2 of the Committee of Ministers, carry out, at regular intervals, within the limits of the available resources and bearing in mind its priorities, an examination of some or all of the conventions for which it has been given responsibility, in co-operation, where appropriate, with the relevant convention-based bodies, and report back to the Committee of Ministers;</p>	<p>The CDDG carried out a review at its 14th meeting, on the state of signatures / ratification and implementation of conventions under its responsibility and on possible further steps regarding this task. Another review was planned for 2024.</p>

<p>(xvi) contribute to the achievement of, and review progress towards, the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular with regards to Goal 5: Gender Equality, Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities and Goal 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions.</p>	<p>The SDGs are taken into account and referred to in the work of the CDDG and the CEGG, for instance in Recommendation CM/Rec(2023)5 on the principles of good democratic governance, which refers explicitly to the SDGs with an emphasis on SDG 16. As for SDG 5, the CDDG's rapporteurs on gender equality review all the draft texts from the perspective of gender mainstreaming, in line also with the CoE's gender equality strategy. The Report on Green Public administration, prepared throughout 2023, and the Conference "The Need for Green Public Administration in the Context of Good Democratic Governance: Exchange of Best European practice" (under the aegis of the Icelandic Presidency of the Committee of Ministers) held on 26 April 2023 echo SDG 11. As mentioned previously, a special page on the SDGs is maintained on the website page of the Democratic Governance Division.</p>
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SPECIFIC TASKS

<p>1. Draft Recommendation on Principles of good democratic governance of general application to all levels of government, building on the 12 Principles of Good Democratic Governance at local level</p>	<p>Recommendation CM/Rec(2023)5 was prepared and subsequently adopted by the Committee of Ministers in September 2023. In addition, an Explanatory Memorandum was also developed.</p>
<p>2. Report on new forms of deliberative and participatory democracy, with a view to complementing Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)4 on the participation of citizens in local public life and the 2017 Guidelines on civil participation in decision-making and taking into account its own work on e-democracy</p>	<p>The report was prepared and subsequently submitted to consideration of the Committee of Ministers in September 2023, and published thereafter. In addition, the CDDG prepared and the Committee of Ministers adopted Recommendation (2023)6 based on the findings of this Report.</p>
<p>3. Report on green public administration aimed at collecting and disseminating good practice and case studies and identifying guidance for administrations at local, regional and national level, taking into account the proceedings of the 2020-2021 edition of the World Forum for Democracy and its previous work on digitalisation of the public administration</p>	<p>The report was prepared and submitted for adoption at the 18th CDDG meeting.</p>
<p>4. Handbook on the use of digital technologies and artificial intelligence by the public administration, identifying case studies, best practice and policy recommendations</p>	<p>(deadline 31/12/2024)</p>

5. Draft Recommendation on multilevel governance	(deadline 31/12/2025)
6. Report on multilevel governance and response to emergencies, building on its work on Democratic governance and the response to the Covid-19 pandemic	The report was prepared and submitted for consideration and adoption at the 18 th CDDG meeting.
7. Report on delivering social services at local level, building on the information collected during its work on Democratic governance and the Covid-19 pandemic	(deadline 31/12/2025)
8. Consultation to take stock of implementation of Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)5 on electronic voting and the Guidelines on new technologies and the different stages of the electoral process, involving the Venice Commission and Election Management Bodies in addition to holding review meetings on the implementation of the said recommendation at least every two years following its adoption	The consultation took place through the conference of 16 June 2023 with the participation of members from national election management bodies; the findings were discussed at the 18 th CDDG meeting.

MEETINGS HELD IN 2022-2023

	Meeting dates	Place/Modality
Bureau		
23 rd meeting	24-25 March 2022	Hybrid/ Strasbourg
24 th meeting	13-14 October 2022	Paris
25 th meeting	23-24 March 2023	Strasbourg
26 th meeting	19-20 October 2023	Strasbourg
ELoGE Platform		
	25 March 2022	Hybrid/ Strasbourg
	24 March 2023	Strasbourg
	20 October 2023	Strasbourg
CDDG		
15 th plenary	21-22 April 2022	Hybrid / Strasbourg
16 th plenary	28-29 November 2022	Strasbourg
Conference on greening public administration (under auspices of Icelandic presidency)	26 April 2023	Strasbourg
17 th plenary	27-28 April 2023	Strasbourg
CDDG conference (in partnership) on implementation of CM/Rec(2017)5 on e-voting	16 June 2023	Strasbourg
18 th plenary	23-24 November 2023	Strasbourg
Working group on principles of good democratic governance (GT-BG)		
	24-25 February 2022	Hybrid / Strasbourg
	9-10 June 2022 (informal)	Online
	15-16 September 2022	Videoconference
Working group on deliberative democracy (GT-DD)		
	5-6 May 2022	Hybrid
	1 + 4 July 2022 (informal)	Online
	26-27 September 2022	Strasbourg
	1 March 2023	Online
Working group on governance (GT-G)		
	2-3 February 2023	Strasbourg
	28 June 2023 (informal)	Online
	21-22 September 2023	Strasbourg
Working group on green public administration (GT-A)		
	2-3 March 2023	Strasbourg
	27 June 2023 (informal)	Online
	2-3 October 2023	Strasbourg