

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



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CDDG(2023)22

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

**18th meeting
Strasbourg, 23-24 November 2023**

ABRIDGED MEETING REPORT

Adopted on 24 November 2023

www.coe.int/cddg

At its 18th plenary meeting (23-24 November 2023, Strasbourg), the European Committee on Democracy and Governance (CDDG), chaired by Paul Rowsell (United Kingdom):

1. adopted the agenda of the meeting;
2. heard information from the Chair, including in relation to his recent letter to all CDDG members (see Annex 1) on the occasion of this last meeting and took note of the report of the 25th CDDG Bureau meeting (held on 19-20 October 2023);

Follow-up to the Fourth summit

3. held an exchange of views with Ambassador Svetlana Geleva, Chair of GR-DEM; Mathieu Mori, Secretary General of the Congress; and Claudia Luciani, Director of Human Dignity, Equality and Governance, on the follow-up decisions being taken following the Fourth Summit of the Council of Europe and their impact on activities and internal Secretariat structures;
4. took note, in that context, that as from 1 January 2024, with the adoption of the terms of reference for the period 2024-2027 and the approval of next year's programme and budget, the CDDG would cease to exist, and that a new Steering Committee on Democracy (CDDEM) would be established. The internal administrative reform would include a transfer of the Centre of Expertise for Good Governance (CEGG) to the Congress Secretariat structure, whilst being directly accountable to the Committee of Ministers. The Secretary General of the Congress assured the CDDG members that the CEGG would maintain its independence and that "nothing will change" in terms of its operations. This reform would streamline activities related to local governance;
5. expressed hope, in that context, that the CDDEM will be able to build on the CDDG's legacy and that activities which had proven successful, such as the ELoGE Label and peer reviews – run until now in close cooperation between the CDDG and the Centre of Expertise – will be pursued with collaboration between the CEGG and the CDDEM;

Workplan 2023

6. considered and approved
 - the draft report on multilevel governance and
 - the draft report on green public administration (with some amendments),

which had been prepared respectively by the working group on governance (GT-G) and the working group on green public administration (GT-A), with the assistance of expert consultants;

7. agreed to make the compendiums of replies to the questionnaires used for both reports accessible online, and invited members not wishing their responses to be included, or wishing to submit corrections, to inform the Secretariat by the 1st December 2023;
8. took stock, in the light of a Secretariat document, of all CDDG activities conducted and completed at the end of the first half of the current quadrennium 2022-2025; noted with satisfaction that most of the general tasks were addressed and that five of the eight specific deliverables have already been implemented at the closure of the meeting with the adoption of the two reports mentioned above;

9. took note of the information provided in a further document (CDDG(2023)14 Addendum) presenting the achievements of the CDDG since its inception in 2014 (see the list in the Annex 2);

10. heard information from members regarding the use, implementation, dissemination and translation of the recently adopted Recommendation (2023)5 on the Principles of Good Democratic Governance (and its Explanatory Memorandum) and Recommendation (2023)6 on Deliberative Democracy, both adopted at the 1473rd meeting of the Ministers' Deputies (6 September 2023);

Sharing experience to promote good democratic governance

11. held an exchange of views with Arbjan Mazniku, Minister of State for Local Government of Albania about the local governance and decentralisation reforms conducted in the last 10 years with the support of the Centre of Expertise and the future changes planned for the multilevel governance relationship between central and local government. The drivers for these changes included EU integration, the impact of increased tourism on municipal infrastructures, and the need for better services at local level; they also included the need to address growing urbanisation and improve the capacity and capability of municipal employees;

12. held an exchange of views with Mr Vitaliy Bezhin, Member of the Parliament of Ukraine, Chair of the Subcommittee on administrative and territorial set-up and local self-government (Parliamentary Committee on Local Self-Government, Regional Development and Urban Planning) on recent developments of territorial and administrative reforms in the context of war, including cooperation with the Centre of Expertise; the Committee reiterated its support for Ukraine;

13. heard and discussed a presentation on the OECD-SIGMA's recently revised and updated Principles of Public Administration, by Bianca Brétéché, Deputy Head of the SIGMA Programme;

14. heard further reports by the Deputy Minister of territorial administration and infrastructure of Armenia as well as delegates from Belgium (Flanders), Cyprus, Finland, and Italy on developments regarding in particular the current state of territorial and administrative reforms (amalgamations of municipalities, decentralisation), the operation of multilevel governance, and projects implemented in cooperation with the Centre of Expertise;

15. heard and discussed a presentation on activities of the International Institute of Administrative Sciences (Brussels) by Professor Dr. Alexander Balthasar, Vice-President for Western Europe of the IIAS, including areas of possible cooperation with Council of Europe activities in the field of democracy and governance;

Review of implementation of Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)5 on e-voting and the Committee of Ministers' guidelines on the use of ICTs

16. heard and discussed a presentation by Rasto Kuzel, Council of Europe expert, on the results of the questionnaire and the conference on "E-voting and use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in elections: taking stock and moving forward" of 16 June 2023; took note in that context of the need for future reviews to possibly use more case studies and to look at specific challenges connected with artificial intelligence;

17. heard further information from the Secretariat on the upcoming conference "Role of Electoral Training Centre" (Strasbourg, 28-29 November) with the participation of experts and Council of Europe actors dealing with electoral matters;

Accreditation Platform of the European Label of Governance Excellence (ELoGE)

18. took note of information provided by the Chair on the 9th meeting of the ELoGE Accreditation Platform (20 October 2023), and the updated regulations adopted on that occasion;

19. examined and approved revised draft Rules of Procedure which have been prepared by the ELoGE platform;

20. heard and discussed information provided by the Secretariat on progress with regard to the implementation of ELoGE in 2023; noted with satisfaction the continuing increase in the number of participating States in the ELoGE programme; took note of the updating of the ELoGE benchmark reflecting the adoption of Recommendation (2023)5 on the principles of good democratic governance, a new draft ELoGE Guide, and a new online ELoGE Tool;

Activities of the Centre of Expertise for Good Governance

21. heard a general update about the activities of the CEGG, its toolkits and cooperation projects, as compiled in its annual activity report for 2023, and was pleased to hear from delegations that the support of the CEGG was greatly valued and praised;

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

22. held an exchange of views with Jānis Kārklīņš, Ambassador of Latvia and with the Latvian delegation, on the activities and achievements under the recent Latvian presidency of the Committee of Ministers (May-November 2023); heard further information from the Secretariat on the priorities of Lichtenstein's current Presidency (November 2023-May 2024) and from the member of the Lithuanian delegation on possible future priorities of his country;

23. heard information from the Secretariat on the recent 11th edition of the World Forum for Democracy (6-8 November 2023), which the CDDG had supported by sponsoring with France's Region Grand Est a forum talk on the contribution of cross-border cooperation to the building of peace and democracy, as well as information on the first consultation of the Secretary General with civil society held on 15 September;

24. held an exchange of views with Gerhard Ermischer, President of CINGO on achievements in 2023 and current general Council of Europe priorities regarding the participation and role of civil society after the Fourth Summit;

25. held an exchange of views with Kristian Bartholin, Secretary of the Committee on Artificial Intelligence (CAI) on progress regarding the drafting of a framework convention on artificial intelligence, and noted with satisfaction that recent suggestions made by the CDDG were being reflected in the draft;

CDDG Rapporteurs

26. heard an update from the rapporteurs on gender mainstreaming;

Other business

27. wished to record its thanks to all those, in particular the ministers from member States who have addressed the Committee, States' ambassadors, delegations, and officials, and the Secretariat, who have over these ten years supported and contributed to the work of the Committee and enabled it to successfully deliver significant results in the field of democracy and governance at the national, regional and local level.

ANNEX1
Letter of the Chair to the CDDG



**Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities**

Paul Rowsell CBE
*Department for Levelling Up, Housing and
Communities*
2nd Floor, Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

Email: _____
Mobile: _____

21 November 2023

Dear Colleagues,

As Chair of the CDDG I am writing to let you know that this week's meeting of the Committee is particularly important. As you may have heard from your Permanent Representative, this will be the last meeting of the CDDG before it is replaced from 1 January 2024 by a new Committee – the Steering Committee on Democracy (CDDEM) - which we expect the Committee of Ministers formally to approve later this week.

The aim of this reform is to give even greater prominence post the Reykjavik Summit to Democracy as one of the three fundamental pillars of the Council of Europe – Democracy, Human Rights, and the Rule of Law. At this week's CDDG meeting we will hear about the role of the new CDDEM, complete certain significant pieces of work which the CDDG has been undertaking, and have an opportunity to celebrate the CDDG's achievements perhaps the most important of which was to lay the foundations on which the Reykjavik Principles on Democracy have been developed.

The new CDDEM's expected role can be summarised as to steer the Council of Europe's intergovernmental work in the field of democracy, and to develop common policy responses and standards, as well as tools, to strengthen democracy, its institutions and processes and good governance at all levels – national, regional and local. We expect at this week's CDDG meeting we will see the Terms of Reference for the new CDDEM as adopted by the Committee of Ministers.

There is an exciting future. Working together in the CDDEM the representatives of member States are expected to have the opportunity of assisting States to address issues potentially undermining democracy at any level and constraining civil society participation, and of helping to make democracies more resilient, including through supporting good governance reforms. It is expected there will be particular opportunities for assisting Ukraine in the recovery and reconstruction of democratic institutions and governance.

Early in the New Year each member State will be invited to designate one or more representatives to the new CDDEM. As always, the Council of Europe will bear the travel and subsistence expenses of one representative from each member State – or two in the case of the State whose representative has been elected Chair.

I look forward to meeting you all on Thursday and to your active participation in the meeting.

I am copying this letter to Ambassador Svetlana Geleva (North Macedonia Permanent Representative and Chair of GR-DEM), Ms Marja Ruotanen (Council of Europe: Director General of Democracy and Human Dignity), Ms Claudia Luciani (Council of Europe: Director of Human Dignity, Equality and Governance), Mr Daniel Popescu (Council of Europe: Head of Department of Democracy and Governance), Ms Alina Tatarenko (Council of Europe: Head of the Democratic Governance Division), and Ambassador Sandy Moss (United Kingdom Permanent Representative).

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P. Rowsell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Paul Rowsell

ANNEX 2

Overview of achievements of the European Committee on Democracy and Governance (CDDG) April 2014 (first meeting) – November 2023 (18th meeting)

Website: [European Committee on Democracy and Governance \(CDDG\) - Good Governance \(coe.int\)](https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-committee-on-democracy-and-governance)

Six legal instruments prepared by the CDDG

[Standards on democratic governance - Good Governance \(coe.int\)](https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-committee-on-democracy-and-governance/good-governance)

- CM/Rec(2023)5 - Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the **principles of good democratic governance** and its explanatory memorandum
- CM/Rec(2023)6 – Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States on **deliberative democracy**
- CM/Rec(2022)2 - Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States on **democratic accountability** of elected representatives and elected bodies at local and regional level
- CM/Rec(2019)3E - Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the **supervision** of local authorities activities
- CM/Rec(2018)4 - Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the **participation of citizens** in local public life
- Revised Appendix to Protocol 3 to the Madrid Outline Convention on **Transfrontier Cooperation** (2015)

Eight reports, guidelines, and policy documents

- Report on Multilevel governance (2023)
- Report on Green Public Administration (2023)
- Report on Deliberative Democracy (2023)
- CM(2022)10 Committee of Ministers Guidelines on the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in electoral processes in Council of Europe member States
- CM(2020)27 Guidelines of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on public ethics
- CM(2017)83 Guidelines for civil participation in political decision making
- Special Report on Democratic Governance and COVID-19
- Compendium of the most relevant Council of Europe texts in the area of democracy (2016), prepared by the CDDG Secretariat under the supervision of the Committee, at the request of the Committee of Ministers

Participation in, and contribution to the work of other Council of Europe bodies

- Participation in the Ad hoc Committee of Experts on Legal, Operational and Technical Standards for **e-voting** (drafting the Recommendation on e-voting)
- Organisation of regular reviews of the implementation of the Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)5 on standards for **e-voting**, in cooperation with the Division of Elections and Participatory Democracy and the Venice Commission
- Regular participation in the work of the Committee on **Artificial Intelligence** (CAI), contribution to the preparation of the Convention on Artificial intelligence
- Regular comments on the recommendations of the Congress and Parliamentary Assembly, at the request of the Committee of Ministers

Sharing experience and promoting European standards

- Rapid Response Service: 54 requests from member states addressed, on subjects including administrative and territorial reforms, elections, the modernisation of public services;
- Peer reviews: CDDG members from 30 member states participated in 24 peer reviews organised by the Centre of Expertise, on the preparation and implementation of multi-level governance reforms;
- Contributions to the World Forum for Democracy: CDDG sponsored the Forum Talk "Building peace and democracy across borders" (2023), and Forum Talk "Deliberation: a booster for Democracy" (2022); organised an online roundtable "Is Democracy Key to Ensuring Peace?" (March 2023);
- International Conference on Democratic Governance and Deliberative Democracy, co-organised with the Lithuanian Ministry of the Interior and the Centre of Expertise for Good Governance in Vilnius (November 2023);
- Conference on Good Democratic Governance in Grado, Italy, in cooperation with the CEGG, AICCRE, and FVG (November 2023);
- Special Conference on Democracy and Governance and the COVID-19 (June 2020)
- Conferences on Cross-Border Cooperation with the Croatian presidency in Dubrovnik (2018) and with the Hungarian presidency in Budapest (2021)
- Conference on Democratic Governance of Metropolitan Areas (Thessaloniki, October 2017)
- Conference on "Inter-municipal cooperation and good governance: Cyprus and the European experience" (February 2017, Nicosia, Cyprus), in cooperation with the Centre of Expertise and the Cypriot presidency;
- Workshops on e-democracy in Belgium and in Hungary (April-May 2015).
- Regular exchanges of views and with various partners working on governance and democracy: Congress, Parliamentary Assembly, Conference of INGOs; EU; UN; Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR); OECD, SIGMA; the Economist Intelligence unit; International IDEA; Policy Committee at the Regional Studies Association (United Kingdom); University of Applied Sciences (Kehl, Germany);
- Regular exchanges of views with members of government and senior officials: at every CDDG plenary.

**Steering ELoGE
(the European Label of Governance Excellence)**

- The ELoGE Accreditation Platform, composed of the CDDG Bureau members and chaired by the Chair of the CDDG, as well as the representatives of CINGO, the Congress, and Parliamentary Assembly, met regularly once or twice a year and delivered ELoGE accreditations to national platforms in 20 member states.

Cooperation with the Centre of Expertise (CEGG)

- Steering the CEGG activities
- Participation in 24 peer reviews
- Participation in the projects and activities organised by the CEGG in 25 member states
- CEGG toolkits and training materials inspired by the standards produced by the CDDG
- Cooperation on implementation and promotion of ELoGE

CDDG and CEGG News: [Democratic Governance newsroom - Good Governance \(coe.int\)](https://www.coe.int/en/web/guest/democratic-governance-newsroom)

High-Level government officials who addressed CDDG meetings

- Albania: Mr Bledar Çuçi, Minister of State for Local Government
Ms Milena Harito, Minister of State for Innovation and Public Administration
Mr Arbjan Mazniku, Minister of State for Local Government
Ms Romina Kuko, Deputy Minister of Interior
- Armenia: Mr Vache Terteryan, Vice-Minister of Territorial Administration and Emergency Situations
- Croatia: Mr Lovro Kuščević, Minister of Public Administration
Mr Ivan Malenica, Minister of Public Administration
- Finland: Mr Jari Partanen, State Secretary, Ministry of Finance
- Georgia: Ms Mzia Giorgobani, Deputy Minister of Regional Development and Infrastructure
Mr Tengis Shergelashvili, Deputy Minister of Regional Development and Infrastructure
- Germany: Mr Markus Richter, State Secretary and Federal Commissioner for Information Technology, Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community
- Greece: Mr Nikos Chardalias, Deputy Minister of Civil Protection and Crisis Management
Mr Panagiotis Skourletis, Minister of Interior
Ms Georgia Valatsou, Permanent Secretary General, Ministry of the Interior

- Ireland: Mr Phil Hogan, Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government
- Latvia: Agnese Geduševa, Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development
- Malta: Ms Hon. Alison Zerafa Civelli, Parliamentary Secretary responsible for Local Government, Malta
- North Macedonia: Ms Slavica Grkovska, Deputy President of the Government in charge of good governance policies of North Macedonia
Mr Damjan Manchevski, Minister for Information Society and Administration
- Norway: Ms Grete Ellingsen, State Secretary, Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation
- Republic of Moldova: Mr Sergiu Ceaus, Deputy State Secretary of the Government
Mr Dumitru UDREA, General Secretary of the Government,
Mr Valentin Guznac, Deputy Secretary General of the Government
- Romania: Ms Alexandra-Luminita Petrescu, State Secretary in the Ministry for Public Consultation and Civil Dialogue
- Slovenia: Mr Nejc Brezovar, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Public Administration
Ms Renata Zatler, State Secretary, Ministry of Public Administration
- Sweden: Mr Oscar Waglund Söderström, State Secretary for EU, Consumer and Democracy Affairs
- Slovak Republic: Mr Ján Lazar, State Secretary, Ministry of the Interior
Mr Vendelín Leitner, State Secretary, Ministry of Interior
- Ukraine: Mr Hennadiy Zubko, Deputy Prime Minister
Ms Oleksandra Azarkhina, Deputy Minister for Communities, Territories and Infrastructure Development of Ukraine
Mr Viacheslav Nehoda, First Deputy Minister of Regional Development
- United Kingdom: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Department for Communities and Local Government