

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Strasbourg, 17 April 2023

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Item 4 of the agenda

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

CONFERENCE ON E-VOTING AND USE OF ICT

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

CONFERENCE

E-voting and use of ICT in elections ***“Taking stock and moving forward”***

Council of Europe, Room 2
Palais de l'Europe, STRASBOURG FRANCE

16 June 2023
9.30-17.00

DRAFT PROGRAMME

Conference co-organised by the
Democratic Governance Division and the Division of Elections and
Participatory Democracy

9:00 – 9:30 Welcoming of participants – Palais de l’Europe

9:30 – 9:45 Opening remarks

- Mr Paul Rowsell, Chair of CDDG
- 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 (tbc)

9:45 – 10:45 Taking stock of the implementation CM/Rec(2017)5 on e-voting

What is the situation with regards to the implementation of the recommendation in Council of Europe member States? What are the main trends, key challenges and lessons learned? How is the Recommendation used and what are member States needs? A summary and analysis of replies from questionnaire (baseline) will be presented, followed by a discussion.

Moderator: Mr Gregor Wenda, Acting Head of Department of Electoral Affairs, Ministry of Interior, Austria

- Mr Rasto Kuzel, Council of Europe expert
Presentation of the key findings of a questionnaire on the implementation of CM/Rec(2017)5 in member States

Questions & Answers

10:45 - 11:00 Coffee break

11:00 - 12:00 Case studies showcasing current work, or experience from Election Management Bodies (EMBs) or Member States with regards to e-voting and online voting.

Case studies from different member States will be presented, highlighting current trends, challenges and innovation in the field of e-voting and online voting, in light of key issues such as trust, cyber threats and resilience, transparency and respect of key principles of the electoral cycle.

Moderator: Mr Franck Daeschler, Deputy Head, Division of elections and participatory democracy, Council of Europe

Pannelists:

- Mr Alexandru Berlinschii, Secretary, Central Election Commission – Republic of Moldova
- Dr Simone Ehrenberg-Silies, Office of Technology Assessment at the German Bundestag - Germany
- Representative from France (tbc)
- Representative from Switzerland (tbc)

Questions & Answers

**12:00 –
13:00**

Debate:

Tackling challenges related to implementation of e-voting solutions

Addressing the challenges to the implementation of e-voting solutions. What are current needs and approaches to secrecy of the vote; data protection and privacy issues; securing and protecting critical infrastructure; auditing and transparency of e-voting solutions and capacity building of stakeholders.

Moderator: Ms Ardita Driza Maurer, Council of Europe expert

Panellists:

- Mr Adrià Rodríguez-Pérez, Public Policy Researcher - ScytI
- Mr Nicolae Panfil, Director of Program - Promo-LEX – Republic of Moldova
- Mr Oliver Kask, Judge, President of the National Election Commission of Estonia, Substitute member of the Venice Commission
- Ms Melanie Volkamer, Karlsruher Institut für Technologie, Germany and Council of Europe expert (tbc)

Questions & Answers

**13:00 -
14:30**

Lunch Break

**14:30 –
15:45**

Digital technologies in elections

Digital transformation impacts all aspects of life, including organisation of elections. Member States are currently digitalising many aspects of their electoral process. The CM Guidelines on the use of ICT in electoral processes provide orientation in this field. What are the issues in practice?

Moderator: Mr Daniel Popescu, Head of Democracy and Governance Department, Council of Europe

Panellists:

- Mr Vladimir Misev, Senior Election Adviser on New Voting Technologies at the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights - OSCE/ODIHR Presentation of ODIHR Handbook "Observation on new voting technologies" (tbc)
- Presentation of findings with regards to e-voting and use of ICT in election from PACE election observation missions (tbc)
- Presentation of findings with regards to e-voting and use of ICT in election from Congress election observation missions (tbc)
- Presentation of relevant digital tools used in campaigning

Discussion of impact of use of new campaigning tools (e.g. Apps and tools to mobilise and target voters; micro-targeting etc.) and impact of algorithms and AI-based solutions in the electoral process as well as of more generally about cyber security in elections.

15:45 – *Coffee break*
16:00

16:00 -
17:00 **Ways forward**

Moderator: Mr Gregor Wenda, Acting Head of Department of Electoral Affairs, Ministry of Interior, Austria

Panellists:

- Mr Robert Krimmer, University of Tartu Estonia, Council of Europe expert (tbc)
- Mr Rasto Kuzel, General Rapporteur - *Discussion on preliminary conclusions from the discussion to be presented at CDDG plenary*

Discussions

Background information:

As per its terms of reference, the European Committee on Democracy and Governance (CDDG) is tasked with holding a review meeting on the implementation of the [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2017\)5 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on standards for e-voting](#) every two years. So far, two review meetings took place, in 2019 and 2021.

These reviews demonstrated that while some member States were in the process of introducing or up-dating legislation on e-voting, most member States are currently not using e-voting solutions. Reasons mentioned for not implementing e-voting solutions include security concerns, lack of public trust, costs, and lack of political consensus. At the same time, member States indicated that information and communication technologies (ICT) were increasingly being used throughout the electoral process. In particular, member States are digitalising various processes within the Election Administration, including such aspects as e-identification of voters and e-counting.

For the next review meeting to be held in 2023, the CDDG agreed at its 14th plenary session to further develop the format of the review and to include the newly adopted [Committee of Ministers' Guidelines on the use of ICT in the electoral process](#) in the scope of the review.

To prepare for the third review, the CDDG proposes to organise a one-day thematic conference on 16 June 2023 in collaboration with the Division of Elections and Participatory Democracy. The conclusions of the conference would then be presented and discussed during the second CDDG plenary in 2023.

The aim of the conference

- To take stock of the current implementation of the Recommendation on e-voting and the use of the Guidelines on ICT in the electoral process in member States and discuss best practice and challenges;
- To identify areas to be developed further as well as cooperation opportunities; and
- To assess the impact of new technologies, such as AI, in this field;
- Recommend ways forward.