



Strasbourg, 31 August 2020

CDDG-Bu(2020)25

**BUREAU OF THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE
ON DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE
(CDDG)**

**REPORT OF THE MEETING
HELD BY VIDEOCONFERENCE, 24 August 2020**

1. Opening of the meeting

Mr Markku Mölläri, Chair *ad interim* of the CDDG, opened the meeting and welcomed members. The list of participants is set out in Appendix I.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The draft agenda was adopted as set out in Appendix II.

3. Recent developments

The Secretariat informed the Bureau of the precautionary measures applied by the Council of Europe in relation to Covid-19. According to the latest communication, given the health situation in France and other European countries, a return to normality was not in sight in September and October. Council of Europe staff were invited to use caution and realism in the planning of activities. Alternative modalities to physical meetings and missions should be preferred whenever possible. Meetings of the CDDG and its subordinate structures in September would take place online.

The Bureau took note of the information while acknowledging that the situation could evolve very quickly, in either direction. As regards the Bureau meeting scheduled to take place on 8 and 9 October 2020, the Bureau confirmed the dates and agreed that the modalities would be decided close to the date of the meeting.

4. 11th Plenary meeting of the CDDG by videoconference, 10-11 September 2020

4.1 General issues

The Secretariat presented the draft agenda of the 11th plenary meeting of the CDDG and confirmed that it would be complemented by an annotated agenda with the approximate time of each item and some additional information.

The Bureau discussed holding elections by means of the KUDO teleconference platform. It was agreed that a specific item should be included in the draft agenda of the 11th plenary meeting of the CDDG, with a view to making a call for candidatures for the posts to be filled, explaining the voting modalities and possibly testing the voting system. This would ensure

the smooth conduct of the vote from a technical point of view, should it take place electronically. Elections for the posts of Chair and Vice-Chair and the vacant posts in the Bureau would be held during the 12th plenary meeting of the CDDG. In this way, in-between the 11th and the 12th meeting, CDDG members would have time for consultations. The Bureau also asked the Secretariat to provide an updated list of CDDG members and to prepare a background document on elections for the 11th plenary meeting of the CDDG.

4.2. Documents to be examined by the Bureau prior to discussion in the CDDG

On the basis of presentations by the Secretariat, the Bureau took note of the state of implementation of the 2020-2021 terms of reference of the CDDG; of the work progress of the working group on democracy and technology; and the work progress of the working group on accountability.

The Bureau also discussed a preliminary draft report on *Democratic governance and Covid-19*. It agreed with the structure of the draft report, which included an analysis of the replies by member States to the questionnaire, additional information that had been provided during the thematic meeting as well as a few illustrative case studies. The Bureau also agreed that an executive summary containing some strong key messages should be added to the report and that all keynote speeches delivered at the thematic meeting of 18 June should be compiled in a separate document. It would be important to expand the part on elections and Covid-19. To this end, a hearing with a representative of the Venice Commission during the 11th plenary of the CDDG would be welcome. Those who wished to have more exhaustive information on each member State could find it in the compendium of replies to the questionnaire, which would be an addendum to the report.

4.3. Items for information

The Bureau took note of information relating to the stocktaking of the Georgian presidency of the Committee of Ministers and the priorities of the Greek chairmanship. Additional information about the World Forum for Democracy would be presented during the 11th plenary meeting of the CDDG. The Bureau took note of the information contained in a Secretariat memorandum on recent activities by other Council of Europe bodies which are of relevance for the CDDG in the light of its terms of reference.

4.4. Documents for approval or discussion by the CDDG which have already been examined by the Bureau at its previous meetings

The Secretariat recalled some documents that had already been examined by the Bureau in previous meetings and would be submitted to the 11th plenary meeting of the CDDG for approval or discussion. These included:

- the Guidelines on e-democracy in the form of a toolkit (handbook on e-democracy);
- the update of the Guide on public ethics;
- the new toolkit on public ethics, addressed to the central authorities;
- the new website, Rules and Regulations concerning the European Label of Governance Excellence (ELoGE).

5. Other business

The Secretariat informed the Bureau that the abridged meeting reports of intergovernmental committees to be approved on the last day of their meetings and to be submitted to the Committee of Ministers should follow a new, harmonised template. The full meeting report would be circulated for approval in writing after the meeting.

The Secretariat also informed the Bureau that Turkey had asked to participate in the working group on democracy and technology and the working group on accountability. The CDDG

would be informed accordingly.

The Bureau discussed the request from the private company [ScytI](#) to take part in the meetings of the working group on democracy and technology as an observer. The Bureau was of the opinion that, while it would be interesting to hear the input of private companies, several considerations weighted against the request, namely: the participation of private companies was not foreseen in the terms of reference of the working group; if the participation of private companies was possible, it should be based on an open call and not merely on a spontaneous request which would give such a company an undue advantage; ScytI's expertise was limited to a specific issue (e-voting) while the mandate of the working group was much broader. As CDDG documents were public, ScytI could still follow its relevant work.

6. Date and place of the next meeting

8-9 October (modalities/place to be confirmed at a later stage)

APPENDIX I**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS****CHAIR AD INTERIM / PRESIDENT AD INTERIM**

Mr Markku MÖLLÄRI, Ministerial adviser, Department for Local Affairs and Regional Administration, Ministry of Finance, Helsinki, Finland
Tel: +358 40 568 1492; E-mail: markku.mollari@vm.fi

OTHER MEMBERS / AUTRES MEMBRES

Mr Peter ANDRE, Ministry of Interior, Senior Expert for Legal Affairs, Wien, Austria,
Tel.: 43 01 53126 – 3376; E-mail: peter.andre@bmi.gv.at

Mr Edwin LEFEBRE, Ministry of the Flemish Community, Agency for Home Affairs, Brussels, Belgium
Tel.: (32) 499 773 439 ; (32) 472 772 308; E-mail: edwin.lefebvre@vlaanderen.be

Mr Paul ROWSELL, Head of Governance Reform and Democracy Unit, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, London, United Kingdom
Tel: +44 (0)303 444 2568; Email: paul.rowsell@communities.gov.uk

SECRETARIAT

Ms Sonia SIRTORI, Head of the Democratic Governance Division – Secretary of the CDDG - Directorate of Human Dignity, Equality and Governance, Directorate General of Democracy
Tel: +33 (0)3 88 41 23 70; E-mail: sonia.sirtori@coe.int

Mr Christophe SPECKBACKER, Administrator – Democratic Governance Division - Directorate of Human Dignity, Equality and Governance, Directorate General of Democracy
Tel: +33 (0)3 90 21 50 28; E-mail: christophe.speckbacher@coe.int

APPENDIX II

AGENDA

1. **Opening of the meeting**
2. **Adoption of the agenda** [CDDG-Bu(2020)OJ5]
3. **Recent developments**
Council of Europe: oral information by the Secretariat
4. **11th Plenary meeting of the CDDG by videoconference, 10-11 September 2020**
 - 4.1. **General issues**
 - Consideration of the draft agenda [CDDG(2020)OJ1]
 - Possibility of holding elections online (presentation by the Secretariat followed by an exchange of views) [CDDG-Bu(2020)19]
 - 4.2. **Documents to be examined by the Bureau prior to discussion in the CDDG**
 - Implementation of the 2020-2021 terms of reference of the CDDG [CDDG-Bu(2020)20]
 - Work progress of the working group on democracy and technology [CDDG-Bu(2020)21]
 - Work progress of the working group on accountability [CDDG-Bu(2020)22]
 - Preliminary draft report on *Democratic governance and Covid-19* [CDDG-Bu(2020)23 + Addendum I and II]
 - 4.3. **Items for information**
 - Stocktaking of the Georgian presidency and priorities of the Greek chairmanship [Stocktaking Priorities](#)
 - 2020 edition of the World Forum for Democracy [Link to webpage](#)
 - Activities of Council of Europe bodies [CDDG-Bu(2020)24]
 - 4.4. **Documents for approval or discussion in the CDDG which have already been examined by the Bureau at previous meetings**
 - Final approval of the Guidelines on e-democracy in the form of a toolkit [CDDG(2020)6]
 - Updating the Guide on public ethics [CDDG(2020)7]
 - Presentation of the new toolkit on public ethics Toolkit
 - The European Label of Governance Excellence [Link to webpage](#)
5. **Other business**
 - Abridged meeting report and meeting report
 - Composition of the working groups (request from Turkey)
 - Participation of a private company in meetings of the working group on democracy and technology (request from [ScytI](#))
6. **Date and place of the next meeting**
8-9 October 2020 (place to be confirmed)