



Strasbourg, 5 November 2021

CDDG-Bu(2021)18

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

22nd meeting, Strasbourg, 14-15 October 2021 (hybrid format)

MEETING REPORT

1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

Mr Markku Mölläri, Chair of the CDDG, opened the meeting and welcomed its members present on-line and in the room for this first meeting since October 2019 that allowed for participation in-person. The Bureau also welcomed Ms Alina Tatarenko, new Head of the Democratic Governance Division and Secretary to the CDDG.

The list of participants is set out in Appendix I. The agenda was adopted as set out in Appendix II.

2. Information on recent activities and developments

The Chair and members referred to recent developments in their respective countries on administrative and regional/territorial reforms, changes to electoral legislation, adoption of action plans on green public administration and on digitalisation, the management of the pandemic and its consequences, and other subject-matters. The Secretariat referred to the breakfast meeting which was held in the morning with members of the Committee of Ministers' Rapporteur Group on Democracy (GR-DEM) and the fruitful discussions which had been held especially in the context of the on-going discussions in the Rapporteur Group about the CDDG's Terms of Reference.

The Secretariat also provided an update on further activities implemented under the responsibility of the Democracy and Governance Department and the current context of progressive easing of meetings in-persons at the Council of Europe. It also referred to the recent dissemination of a questionnaire – including to member States' election management bodies, with the support of the Venice Commission – to gather information for a review of the implementation of the Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)5 on standards for e-voting, to be held at the 14th CDDG meeting. The Bureau took note of the information.

3. State of implementation of the CDDG activities according to its terms of reference 2020-2021

3.1 Democracy and technology

The Bureau took note of the 5th meeting report of the Working Group on Democracy and Technology, as set out in document *GT-DT(2021)5* examined the latest version of the draft Guidelines on the use of ICT in the different stages of the electoral process (task ii), as set out in *CDDG-Bu(2021)11*. In the discussion, members of the Bureau expressed their support for the document, as it was comprehensive, concise, practical and timely (given the increasing interest in the subject of e-voting in different member States). The Bureau agreed to submit the text for consideration and final adoption at the 14th CDDG meeting.

3.2 Democratic accountability

The Bureau took note of the reports of the 4th and 5th meetings of the Working Group on accountability, as set out in documents *GT-RE(2021)4* and *GT-RE(2021)7*. It considered the draft Recommendation for the Committee of Ministers on democratic accountability of elected officials and bodies at local and regional level (task iii) – document *CDDG-Bu(2021)12*. Bureau members expressed a preference for a shorter and more concise document, comprising in particular a single annex (instead of two), and with various other adjustments including with regards to a more explicit title (“elected officials and elected bodies”). The Bureau reviewed an amended version proposed by the delegation of the United Kingdom and subsequently agreed that it be submitted for consideration and final adoption at the 14th CDDG meeting, accompanied by the Study prepared by the scientific expert Arnaud Duranthon (adapted as necessary to the latest changes made to the draft Recommendation) for future publication on the CDDG website.

4. CDDG Terms of Reference 2022-2025, and

5. Work Plan for 2021 and outlook for 2022

Bureau members took note of the draft terms of reference for 2022-2025 (document *CDDG-Bu(2021)13*), currently under consideration before the Committee of Ministers, and heard additional information from the Secretariat regarding the intended resourcing of the Committee and the state of play of discussions in the GR-DEM and other Rapporteur Groups.

The Bureau considered a possible workplan for 2022 (document *CDDG-Bu(2021)14*) and beyond and discussed priorities regarding work to be initiated in 2022. It took the view that the CDDG should start as a priority work on a draft Recommendation on the 12 Principles of Good Democratic governance applicable to all levels of government, and on a Report on deliberative democracy (specific tasks i. and ii. respectively, of the draft terms of reference), and thus establish two working groups to this effect. The Secretariat pointed out that the Division on Elections was currently preparing a report on deliberative democracy which could serve as a basis for the CDDG’s work on task ii. One of the two working groups would need to finalise its work within one year, or one year and a half, so as to allow the CDDG to launch activities by a third working group in the beginning of 2023 on a Report on green public administration (specific task iii) after some preliminary work in 2022. The experience with on-line meetings had shown that working progress can be

achieved, if necessary, through on-line and/or written consultations, in-between working group and plenary meetings, and that this facilitates the involvement of participants with specific expertise.

As regards specific task ii., the subject could justify that the CDDG innovates by involving civil society organisations more closely in its work. The CDDG could also assist this working group with guidance and information on the implementation of Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)4 on the participation of citizens in local public life.

6. 14th plenary meeting of the CDDG

The Bureau then considered a draft agenda for the 14th plenary meeting prepared by the Secretariat (document *CDDG(2021)OJ2 prov.*), and heard information on the state of preparation. Bureau members stressed that it was important for the CDDG to keep up with the practice of exchanges of views with members of national governments and that contacts established in member States through the cooperation activities could be used to a greater extent to identify potential senior guests. The Bureau took the view that the item on the Review on Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)5 on standards for e-voting should also involve the participation of Electoral Management Bodies and/or the Venice Commission. The Bureau considered that since this was still a moving area and the draft terms of reference for 2022-2025 contained specific tasks on the drawing of lessons from the management of the pandemic and its consequences, there was no need to produce a separate update of the CDDG's special report on "Democratic governance and Covid-19" from November 2020.

More generally, the Bureau expressed a preference for a presentation of CDDG meeting agendas which better highlights significant items and those which are for information, for discussion and for decision.

7. Activities of the Centre of Expertise for Good Governance

The Bureau took note of information presented by the Secretariat on activities of the Centre of Expertise (document *CDDG-Bu(2021)15*), in particular its Strategic Plan for 2022-2025, which aims at taking into consideration also the CDDG's own activities and priority areas.

8. Contribution to the World Forum for Democracy

The Secretariat updated Bureau members about plans for the conference on 8-10 November, which would conclude this year's edition of the World Forum for Democracy, in form of a 12- months campaign. The latter had offered a timely opportunity for the CDDG to contribute by means of short webinars on [The 15-Minute City: Lockdown Daydreaming or a Model for Sustainable Urban Living?](#) (April 2021), [Public private partnerships for green city solutions](#) (July 2021) and [Public Administration as a green leader](#) (September 2021), with the support from CDDG delegations who had suggested speakers. The Bureau took note of the information.

9. Presidency of the Committee of Ministers

The Secretariat informed the Bureau in particular about the [Conference on Cross-Border Cooperation](#) held in Budapest on 9-10 September 2021, under the Hungarian Presidency of the Committee of Ministers, and co-organised by the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Central European Service for Cross-border Initiatives, and the Centre of Expertise for Good Governance. It will be followed by two further events (co-)organised by the Centre of Expertise and the Hungarian Association of Local Authorities (ELoGE and Best Practice Awards). The Bureau took note of the information.

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

The new Head of the Division on elections and participatory democracy introduced himself and indicated his readiness to pursue the practice of this Division presenting its annual activity report to the CDDG. The Secretariat explained that this would allow to further increase interactions between the CDDG and activities in the field of elections and citizen participation, drawing inspiration from the relations between the CDDG and the Centre of Expertise. The Bureau took note of the information.

The Secretariat presented a document with an overview of activities and initiatives by other Council of Europe bodies in areas of interest to the CDDG (document *CDDG-Bu(2021)16*), including the annual report of the Secretary General on the state of democracy, human rights and the Rule of Law (May 2021), the adoption by the Committee of Ministers of a Strategic Framework for the Council of Europe for the next four years (May 2021), and various initiatives by the Congress (including the definition of priorities for 2021-2026), the Assembly and other bodies. Several Recommendations from the Assembly and Congress had prompted the Committee of Ministers to request comments from the CDDG.

The Bureau discussed alternatives to the adoption of comments by recourse to the written procedure due to the tight deadlines and the holding of no more than two meetings per year by the CDDG. The Bureau expressed the wish that drafts which cannot be considered by the CDDG at a forthcoming meeting should in future be reviewed by the Bureau before adoption by the written procedure.

The Bureau also discussed ways to give greater effect to the CDDG's responsibility for certain treaties, which should in particular translate into their regular examination in accordance with its terms of reference and related documents¹. It instructed the Secretariat to make available at every plenary meeting an overview of the state of signatures and ratifications concerning the legal instruments concerned, possibly as part of a specific agenda item.

11. Elections of the Bureau of the CDDG for 2022

The Bureau heard a presentation by the Secretariat. Since all positions on the Bureau are becoming vacant in 2022, elections should ideally be held at the end of the CDDG's 14th meeting in November. The information document (*CDDG-Bu(2021)17*) also referred to the use of a combined voting system given that the meeting would be held in a hybrid format (using the ballot box for those in the room, and the Kudo platform's poll function for those attending on-line). The Bureau agreed to the holding of elections, with candidates being asked to come forward and to submit a resume well in advance of the meeting. The Bureau also instructed the Secretariat to examine ways for holding elections exclusively through the conference platform, e.g. with a set of computers in the meeting room.

12. Other business

The Chair informed the Bureau that he had been invited to present the Council of Europe standards and activities in the field of democratic governance at a conference in Madrid organised by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation on 25-26 November. Mr Edwin Lefebre offered that himself and the other gender equality rapporteur provide an update on gender mainstreaming at the 14th meeting.

13. Next meeting

The next Bureau meeting would be held in March 2022 in Paris, date to be confirmed in the context of the workplan for 2022.

¹ In accordance with main task x of the terms of reference 2020-2021, and main task xv of the draft terms of reference 2022-2025. The treaties concerned are the following:

- CETS 106 - European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Cooperation between Territorial Communities or Authorities
- CETS 122 - European Charter of Local Self-Government
- CETS 144 - Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level
- CETS 159 - Additional Protocol to the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities
- CETS 169 - Protocol No. 2 to the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities concerning interterritorial co-operation
- CETS 206 - Protocol No. 3 to the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities concerning Euroregional Co-operation Groupings (ECGs)
- CETS 207- Additional Protocol to the European Charter of Local Self-Government on the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority

APPENDIX I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

CHAIR / PRESIDENT

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

OTHER MEMBERS / AUTRES MEMBRES

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

Mr Francesco GIUSTINO, Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, D.A.R.A. - Ufficio Attività Internazionali, ROMA

Ms Albana KOÇIU, Director of the Department of Public Administration

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

Mr Paul ROWSELL, Head of Governance Reform and Democracy Unit, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, LONDON

Ms Stefanía TRAUSTADÓTTIR, Senior Advisor, Local Government, Department of Local Government and Regional Policy, Ministry of Transport and Local Government, REYKJAVÍK

OTHER PARTICIPANT / AUTRES PARTICIPANT

Ms Siobhan SMYTH, Senior Policy Adviser, Governance Reform and Democracy Unit, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, LONDON

SECRETARIAT

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

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

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

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

Ms Isabelle ETTER – Assistant – Democratic Governance Division - Directorate of Human Dignity, Equality and Governance - Directorate General of Democracy

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

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

Interpreters / Interprètes

Ms Julia TANNER
Mr Didier JUNGLING

APPENDIX II**AGENDA**

- 1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda**
- 2. Information on recent activities and developments**
 - Oral information by the Secretariat and members
- 3. State of implementation of the CDDG activities according to its terms of reference 2020-2021**
 - *Democracy and technology*
 - Report of the 5th meeting of the Working Group on democracy and technology *[GT-DT(2021)5]*
 - Consideration of draft guidelines on new technologies and the different stages of the electoral process (task ii) with a view to its adoption by the plenary *[CDDG-Bu(2021)11]*
 - *Democratic accountability*
 - Reports of the 4th and 5th meetings of the Working Group on accountability *[GT-RE(2021)4] + [GT-RE(2021)7]*
 - Consideration of a draft Recommendation for the Committee of Ministers on democratic accountability of elected officials and bodies at local and regional level (task iii) and a study for future publication on the CDDG website *[CDDG-Bu(2021)12]*
- 4. CDDG terms of reference 2022-2025** *[CDDG-Bu(2021)13]*
- 5. Work Plan for 2021 and outlook for 2022**
 - Information by the Secretariat *[CDDG-Bu(2021)14]*
- 6. 14th plenary meeting of the CDDG**
 - Consideration of the preliminary draft agenda *[CDDG(2021)OJ2 prov.]*
- 7. Activities of the Centre of Expertise for Good Governance**
 - Strategic Plan 2022-2025 *[CDDG-Bu(2021)15]*
- 8. Contribution to the World Forum for Democracy**
 - 23 September 2021 [Public Administration as a green leader](#)
 - 20 July 2021 [Public private partnerships for green city solutions](#)
 - 29 April 2021 [The 15-Minute City: Lockdown Daydreaming or a Model for Sustainable Urban Living?](#)
- 9. Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers**
[Webpage](#) on the Hungarian presidency

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

[CDDG-Bu(2021)16]

11. Elections of the Bureau of the CDDG for 2022

[CDDG-Bu(2021)17]

12. Other business

13. Next meeting

Date and modalities