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CDENV(2026)1

STEERING COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT

**TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE
STEERING COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT (CDENV)**

Document prepared by the Secretariat

Terms of reference of the

Steering Committee on the Environment (CDENV)

Set up by the Committee of Ministers under Article 17 of the Statute of the Council of Europe and in accordance with [Resolution CM/Res\(2021\)3-consolidated](#) on intergovernmental committees and subordinate bodies, their terms of reference and working methods.

Category: Steering committee

Duration: 1 January 2026- 31 December 2027

Programme: Advancing social justice, good health and a sustainable environment

Sub-programme: Protection of the environment and human rights

Main tasks

Under the authority of the Committee of Ministers, and bearing in mind the Council of Europe's legal standards, the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights, relevant decisions and resolutions of the Committee of Ministers adopted under Article 46(2) of the ECHR, and the findings and recommendations of the relevant monitoring bodies, the CDENV co-ordinates the intergovernmental work in the field of the environment and advises the Committee of Ministers on appropriate action to be taken in its field of competence, ensuring a multidisciplinary and cross-sectoral approach, promoting democratic governance and inclusive participation, and leveraging synergies with partners and stakeholders. The CDENV is in particular instructed to:

- i. take due account of the Reykjavik Declaration,¹ in particular its Appendix V on "The Council of Europe and the Environment", in conducting its activities and submit proposals for its implementation as appropriate;
- ii. take account of the relevant key findings and challenges set out in the Secretary General's annual reports on the state of democracy, human rights and rule of law² and contribute, where relevant, to the process towards a New Democratic Pact for Europe;
- iii. in co-operation with the relevant committees, oversee, support and report on the implementation of the Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment (2025-2030) and its Action Plan;
- iv. provide a forum for:
 - a. **exchanges** on existing and emerging environmental challenges and their impact on human rights, democracy and the rule of law;
 - b. gathering expertise, collecting good practices and exchanging experiences among member States;
- v. promote the signature and ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law in co-operation with the European Committee of Crime Problems (CDPC);
- vi. promote the mainstreaming of environmental objectives and concerns into the Council of Europe governance and activities, in particular by the creation of synergies with the relevant committees and bodies;
- vii. raise-awareness about CoE standards and tools in its field of competence in the member States and beyond, through the neighbourhood policy and in other international and global fora where relevant;
- viii. advise relevant bodies of the Council of Europe on the priority areas for the development of environmental co-operation activities, including landscape related matters;
- ix. coordinate Council of Europe contribution to major global processes concerning the protection of the environment and regularly exchange views with the Organisations leading them to achieve synergies and add value in line with Council of Europe core mission and values;
- x. 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;
- xi. 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 Roma and Traveler issues;³
- xii. where relevant, contribute to strengthening meaningful engagement with civil society organisations and national human rights institutions, in particular specialised organisations and bodies specialised in the field of the protection of the environment, in its work, including landscape related matters;
- xiii. in accordance with decisions CM/Del/Dec(2013)1168/10.2 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 responsibility⁴ and report back to the Committee of Ministers;

¹ Reykjavik Declaration - United around our values.

² Cf. Secretary General's report 2025 "Towards a New Democratic Pact for Europe".

³ The term "Roma and Travellers" is used at the Council of Europe to encompass the wide diversity of the groups covered by the work of the Council of Europe in this field: on the one hand a) Roma, Sinti/Manush, Calé, Kaale, Romanichals, Boyash/Rudari; b) Balkan Egyptians (Egyptians and Ashkali); c) Eastern groups (Dom, Lom and Abdal); and, on the other hand, groups such as Travellers, Yenish, and the populations designated under the administrative term "Gens du voyage", as well as persons who identify themselves as Gypsies. The present is an explanatory footnote, not a definition of Roma and/or Travellers.

⁴ Cf. relevant decisions of the Committee of Ministers (CM/Del/Dec(2013)1168/10.2) and list of Conventions in document CM(2025)132-

- xiv. contribute to the achievement of, and review progress towards, the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular with regard to Goal 3: Good health and well-being, Goal 5: Gender equality, Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, Goal 13: Climate action, Goal 14: Life below water, Goal 15: Life on Land and Goal 17: Partnerships for the goals.

Main deliverables

Under the authority of the Committee of Ministers, the CDENV is instructed to complete these deliverables, within the following deadlines:

	Priority ▼	Deadline ▼
1. Mid-term review of the Council Europe Strategy on the Environment (2025-2030) and its Action Plan in co-operation with all relevant bodies	1	31/12/2027
2. Review of disinformation, misinformation and access to information on environment-related matters including good practices and recommendations for action, also reflecting the perspective of young people and children (In co-operation with CDNET, CDMSI, CDEDU, CDDEM, CDADI, CDENF, CMJ, CDCULT)	1	31/12/2026
3. Study on the conditions enabling child and young environmental defenders to access information, to safely and freely express themselves, to issue recommendations and to access justice. A child-friendly version of the report will be made available (in co-operation with the CDCJ, CDPC, CMJ, CDENF, the North-South Centre)	1	31/12/2026
4. Review of practices of courts, tribunals and legal professionals specialising in environmental law, including the identification of good procedural and substantive practices (in co-operation with CEPEJ, CDPC, CDCJ, CCJE, CCPE)	1	31/12/2026
5. Policy guidance and advice on capacity building measures for the adoption of Nature-based Solutions and ecosystem-based approaches embedded in the broader governance structures	1	31/12/2026
6. Non legally binding collection of case studies and set of practical guidelines on the integration of existing human rights perspectives into national environmental strategies, law and policies (without seeking to recognise and define an autonomous right to a healthy environment) (in co-operation with the CDDH, CDCJ and CDPC, GEC, CDNET, CDADI, CDDEM, CDENF, CMJ, CDCULT)	2	31/12/2027
7. Review of the rights of older people and challenges faced by them in the context of environmental challenges, including, but not limited, to the access of information (in co-operation with the ECSR, Governmental Committee of the European Social Charter and the European Code of Social Security, CDDH)	1	31/12/2027
8. Follow up to the implementation of the Council of Europe Landscape Convention	1	31/12/2027
9. Consolidated review of the Council of Europe work on the protection and conservation of wildlife, ecosystems and protection, management and planning of landscapes, in co-operation with the relevant structures of relevant Conventions and other Intergovernmental Organisations.	2	31/12/2027
10. Review of the status of the Council of Europe Conventions on animal welfare	2	31/12/2027

Composition

• Members

Governments of member States are invited to designate one or more representatives of the highest possible rank in the field of protection of the environment, including landscape, and countering the impact of the triple planetary crisis of pollution, climate change and loss of biodiversity on human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

The Council of Europe will bear the travel and subsistence expenses of one representative from each member State (two in the case of the state whose representative has been elected Chair). Member States may send other representatives without defrayal of expenses.

Each member of the Committee shall have one vote. Where a government designates more than one member, only one of them is entitled to take part in the voting.

In accordance with decisions CM/Del/Dec(2013)1168/10.2 of the Committee of Ministers, in cases where there is no convention-based body including all the Parties, non-member States are invited to take part, with a right to vote, in the committee meetings pertaining to the conventions to which they are Parties.

• Participants

The following may send representatives, without the right to vote and at the charge of their corresponding administrative budgets:

- Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe;
- Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe;
- European Court of Human Rights;
- European Committee of Social Rights;
- Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe;
- Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe;
- Committees or other bodies of the Council of Europe engaged in related work, as appropriate.

The following may send representatives, without the right to vote and without defrayal of expenses:

- European Union (one or more representatives, including, as appropriate, the European Environment Agency (EEA) and/or, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA));
- Observer States to the Council of Europe: Canada, Holy See, Japan, Mexico, United States of America;
- non-member States participating in the Bern Convention (Burkina Faso, Morocco, Senegal, Tunisia);
- international organisations including: the United Nations and its agencies; the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE); the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD); other international organisations;

• Observers

The following may send representatives, without the right to vote and without defrayal of expenses:

- non-member States with which the Council of Europe has a Neighbourhood Partnership including relevant co-operation activities;
- States having been invited by decision of the Committee of Ministers to participate in the negotiations;
- interested organisations from Civil Society: the Council of Europe welcomes and promotes the widest participation of civil society, in line with the Guidance note on Civil Society Participation in the Intergovernmental Work of the Council of Europe CDDEM(2024)14, as Observers. Observer status may be requested in accordance with Article 8 of [Resolution CM/Res\(2021\)3-consolidated](#) on intergovernmental committees and subordinate bodies, their terms of reference and working methods.

Working methods

The rules of procedure of the Committee are governed by [Resolution CM/Res\(2021\)3-consolidated](#) on intergovernmental committees and subordinate bodies, their terms of reference and working methods. Online participation in meetings will be available.

The Bureau of the CDENV will consist of the Chair, the Vice-Chair, and three further members.

	Plenary meetings ▼			Bureau Meetings ▼		
	Members incl. chair	Meetings per year	Days per meeting	Members	Meetings per year	Days per meeting
2026	47	2	2 hybrid	5	2	1 online
2027	47	2	2 hybrid	5	2	1 online

The CDENV will appoint from amongst its members up to 5 Rapporteurs on mainstreamed perspectives, including a Gender Equality Rapporteur.

Budgetary information*

	Meetings per year	Days per meeting	Members reimbursed	Plenary in €K	Bureau in €K	Working groups in €K	Secretariat (A, B)
2026	2	2	47	116,0	-	-	1A; 1B
2027	2	2	47	116,0	-	-	1A; 1B

*The costs include the per diem, travel costs, interpretation, translation and document printing. These costs are calculated on the basis of standard cost