

Steering Committee on Media and Information Society (CDMSI)

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\(2011\)24](#) on intergovernmental committees and subordinate bodies, their terms of reference and working methods.

Type of committee: Steering Committee

Terms of reference valid from: **1 January 2020 until 31 December 2021**

Pillar/Programme/Sub-Programme
Pillar: Human Rights
Programme: Effective ECHR implementation
Sub-programme: Freedom of expression, media and data protection
Main tasks
<p>Under the authority of the Committee of Ministers, the CDMSI steers the Council of Europe's work in the fields of freedom of expression, media, internet governance and other information society-related issues and oversees the work on personal data protection.</p> <p>The CDMSI advises the Committee of Ministers on all questions within its area of expertise, including freedom, independence, pluralism and diversity of media; safety of journalists; support for professional journalism, protection and promotion of human rights, in particular freedom of expression in the information society.</p> <p>The CDMSI facilitates and promotes co-operation among Council of Europe member States by developing common policies, reviewing their implementation and fulfilling any other activity which might be assigned to it by the Committee of Ministers. The CDMSI takes due account of relevant transversal perspectives.</p> <p>To this end, the CDMSI is instructed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) evaluate, plan and carry out standard-setting activities in areas within its expertise, including review and consolidation of existing instruments, in the light of developments relating to the information society;(ii) promote and facilitate awareness raising on Council of Europe standards and their implementation by member States;(iii) identify emerging challenges to member States in areas within its expertise, conduct studies and legal analyses on freedom of expression and media-related issues, with a special focus on the

challenges arising from information society developments and undue influence on democratic processes, and make proposals to the Committee of Ministers;

(iv) co-ordinate standard-setting work in respect of the protection of personal data and the right to private life, in close association with other relevant Council of Europe bodies such as the T-PD and the CDCJ;

(v) follow and, as appropriate, contribute to the substantive aspects of co-operation programmes with Council of Europe member States and support activities within national initiatives in the field of the media and information society;

(vi) take the European Convention on Human Rights and the evolving jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights into consideration in its thematic work;

(vii) follow the implementation of the non-binding instruments that it has prepared as well as conventions for which it has been given supervision by the Committee of Ministers;

(viii) without prejudice to the mandates of intergovernmental committees of the Council of Europe that already follow the work of monitoring mechanisms, follow the activities of the relevant monitoring and other bodies or convention mechanisms;

(ix) 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;

(x) take due account of gender and children's rights perspectives, building cohesive societies and promoting and protecting rights of persons with disabilities in the performance of its tasks;

(xi) 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 responsibility,^[6] in co-operation, where appropriate, with the relevant convention-based bodies, and report back to the Committee of Ministers;

(xii) contribute to the achievement of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular with regards to Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong institutions.

Specific tasks

(i) Oversee the Implementation Strategy of Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2016\)4](#) on the safety of journalists and other media actors: prepare, promote and disseminate an Implementation Guide as a tool to boost the implementation of the recommendation; create tools for sharing best practices and training in the field.

- (ii) In co-operation with the Steering Committee on Anti-discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI), develop a new and comprehensive legal instrument on combating hate speech building on the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights and drawing upon existing Council of Europe texts.
- (iii) Examine, assess and alert on emerging issues related to freedom of expression in the digital age.
- (iv) Contribute to the implementation of the next Digital Governance Strategy in its field of expertise.
- (v) Prepare the Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Media and Information Society (Nicosia, Cyprus, 28-29 May 2020) in accordance with its subject and expected results, as outlined in the conference proposal approved by the Committee of Ministers on 28 November 2018 ([CM/Del/Dec\(2018\)1330/5.1](#)); ensure follow-up to the Committee of Ministers' decisions taken subsequent to the 2020 Ministerial Conference.
- (vi) Prepare a draft recommendation with guiding principles for media and communication governance in order to address the shift from established channels to social networks and of related risks (manipulation of public opinion, lack of public trust, information disorder).
- (vii) Prepare a draft recommendation by the Committee of Ministers to member States on election communication and media coverage of electoral campaigns.
- (viii) Prepare a guidance note on regulatory/policy requirements, **compatible with freedom of expression and information, responding to** users' needs and technical possibilities related to the prioritisation of public interest content on relevant social and search platforms and other news aggregators.
- (ix) Prepare a draft recommendation by the Committee of Ministers to member States on the impacts of digital technologies on freedom of expression.
- (x) Prepare a guidance note on best practices by and with internet intermediaries and other stakeholders towards effective **legal and procedural frameworks for self-regulatory and co-regulatory** mechanisms for the restriction or moderation of illegal or harmful content, in line with the **European Convention on Human Rights, the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights and other relevant Council of Europe standards on freedom of expression and information.**
- (xi) Review progress towards the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs), as evidenced by monitoring mechanisms and promoted through standard-setting and exchange of experiences and good practices.

Composition

Members:

Governments of member States are invited to designate one or more representatives of the highest possible rank in the relevant fields (freedom of expression, media, internet governance and data protection policies).

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).

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;
- Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights;
- Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe;
- Ad hoc Committee on Artificial Intelligence (CAHAI)
- Council of Europe Committee on Counter-Terrorism (CDCT);
- European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI);
- European Committee on Legal Co-operation (CDCJ);
- Consultative Committee of the Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to automatic processing of personal data (T-PD);
- Cybercrime Convention Committee (T-CY);
- Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH);
- Steering Committee for Education Policy and Practice (CDPPE);
- European Committee on Democracy and Governance (CDDG);

- Joint Council on Youth (CMJ);
- European Audiovisual Observatory;
- other committees or 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 (including, as appropriate, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA));
- Observer States to the Council of Europe: Canada, Holy See, Japan, Mexico, United States of America;
- Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE);
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD);
- Organization of American States (OAS);
- UN agencies (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation - UNESCO);
- International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

Observers:

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

- Belarus;
- non-member States with which the Council of Europe has a Neighbourhood Partnership including relevant co-operation activities;
- civil society and representatives of business, technical, professional and academic communities.

Working methods

Plenary meetings:

48 members, 2 meetings in 2020, 3 days

48 members, 2 meetings in 2021, 3 days

Bureau meetings:

7 members, 2 meetings in 2020, 2 days

7 members, 2 meetings in 2021, 2 days

The Committee will appoint a Gender Equality Rapporteur and a Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities from amongst its members.

The rules of procedure of the Committee are governed by Resolution [CM/Res\(2011\)24](#) on intergovernmental committees and subordinate bodies, their terms of reference and working methods.

Whenever appropriate, it will prioritise environmentally sound working methods, such as virtual meetings facilitated by information technology and written consultations.

Subordinate structure(s)

The CDMSI supervises its subordinate bodies:

- Committee of Experts on Freedom of Expression and Digital Technologies (MSI-DIG) (see separate terms of reference);
- Committee of Experts on Media Environment and Reform (MSI-REF) (see separate terms of reference);
- Committee of Experts on Combating Hate Speech (ADI/MSI-DIS) (see separate terms of reference).

BUDGETARY INFORMATION*

	Meetings per year	Number of days	Members	Plenary €K	Bureau €K	Working groups	Secretariat (A, B)
2020	2	3	48	123.5	19.0		2 A; 1 B
2021	2	3	48	123.5	19.0		2 A; 1 B

*The costs include the per diem, travel costs, interpretation, translation and document printing. These costs are calculated on the basis of the 2020 standard costs.