

*Council of Europe*  
*The Secretary General*

Strasbourg, 20 August 2020

Dear Chairs,

The Committee of Ministers asked me to prepare a four-year strategic framework reflecting the priorities for the Council of Europe's longer-term mission, building on the priorities underlying the Programme and Budget 2020-2021.

In line with the Committee of Ministers' decision, this strategic framework will identify the main foreseeable challenges ahead and consider the potential for achieving stronger synergy among and between our key bodies and their activities.

This four-year strategic outlook will also give the Organisation the opportunity to enhance the stability of our planning and programming.

In preparing it, I will rely on stakeholders' input. In view of the importance of our steering and ad hoc committees for the Council of Europe, as reaffirmed by the Committee of Ministers at its 129th Session (Helsinki, May 2019), I am keen to seek their input through you as to what the strategic framework's main features should be, in light of your practical experience in your respective fields of action. I also consulted the heads of the Council of Europe monitoring and advisory bodies.

I will subsequently hold informal consultations with member states and prepare a document outlining tangible proposals, which will be submitted for the Committee of Ministers' consideration, with a view to the adoption of relevant decisions at the Ministerial Session in May 2021.

Consequently, I invite you to send me your contributions by **30 September, close of business**, in the form of concise replies to the appended questionnaire, to be addressed by email to my Private Office ([private.office@coe.int](mailto:private.office@coe.int)).

I am convinced that this exercise constitutes an excellent opportunity to reflect together on how to make the Council of Europe stronger and more relevant. I look forward to reading your views.

Yours sincerely,



Marija Pejčinović Burić

**Circular letter to the Chairs of steering committees  
and ad hoc committees and the Secretary of the CDADI**

Appendices:

- Committee of Ministers' decision [CM/Del/Dec\(2019\)1361/11.1-Part1](#) (point 8.e relating to the four-year strategic framework)
- Questionnaire

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## **Questionnaire for the Chairs of the Council of Europe steering committees and ad hoc committees and the Secretary of the CDADI**

### ***Strategic priorities***

What should be the key priorities for the Organisation in order to best respond to the challenges faced by European societies?

What is the role and added value of the Council of Europe in addressing these challenges?

### ***Governance and working methods***

In view of the strategic priorities you have identified:

What role could be played by intergovernmental committees? What possible changes could be envisaged to fulfil this role?

Is the virtuous circle of standard-setting/monitoring/co-operation still relevant? If yes, can the link and co-ordination with the monitoring and co-operation sectors be improved, and how?

How does your intergovernmental body develop synergies and co-ordination with other bodies and entities of the Council of Europe, and externally?

Does the structure of the Secretariat favour synergies with other activities undertaken in the same area by other sectors of the Organisation? Can it be improved, and how?

How could digital developments facilitate your work?

### ***Lessons learnt from the sanitary crisis***

How has the current crisis impacted the policies and priorities of governments across Europe in your area of responsibility? Have new needs for standards emerged as a result?

How has the current crisis impacted the functioning of your intergovernmental body?

What kind of risks or opportunities have you experienced/have you seen emerge during the current crisis? How should the continuing work of your body be shaped in view of these risks and opportunities?