

EVALUATION OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE'S MONITORING MECHANISMS

Management response & Action plan



September 2022

Name of Evaluation Report:	Evaluation of the Council of Europe’s monitoring mechanisms		
Date of Evaluation Report:	18/05/2022	Date of the Action Plan:	08/09/2022

Overall management response to the evaluation:

In her Strategic Framework of the Council of Europe (SG/Inf(2020)34), the Secretary General makes a number of proposals aimed at further strengthening cohesion and synergies among and between Council of Europe monitoring mechanisms. She mentions among the concrete achievements (deliverables) identified for the period 2022-2025:

- Facilitating reporting obligations under monitoring mechanisms, particularly by aligning monitoring and reporting (similar to the UN practice of a single “core document”) for several monitoring mechanisms with targeted questionnaires between the monitoring cycles.
- Achievement of enhanced co-ordination (alignment of visits, joint visits etc.) at the level of the Organisation, as well as with respect to the monitoring activities of other international organisations.

At their 131st Session, the Committee of Ministers expressed its appreciation for the Secretary General’s Strategic Framework of the Council of Europe, welcomed the report by their Deputies on Council of Europe monitoring – strengthening cohesion and synergies ([CM\(2021\)50-final](#)) and endorsed its conclusions. With respect to Council of Europe monitoring mechanisms, the Ministers invited the Secretary General to continue her regular dialogue with the chairs of the monitoring bodies with a view to strengthening synergies and co-ordination and to report back in time for the Ministerial Session in May 2022. In that report (SG/Inf(2020)5), the Secretary General concluded that the work of the Council of Europe monitoring mechanisms is highly valued and they are an important part of the Council of Europe acquis. The report further stated that the difficult pandemic period demonstrated clearly that monitoring mechanisms were able to evolve and adapt their working methods and rise to the challenges posed. To this end, constant and concrete efforts have been made to enhance co-ordination between the monitoring mechanisms themselves and with other parts of the Organisation, as well as with other international organisations and external partners. Modern technologies have increasingly been used to boost the efficiency and visibility of the monitoring mechanisms and to facilitate dialogue with the member states and reporting. Good practices in these areas have been highlighted and should be spread across the monitoring bodies.

In the present evaluation report, the Evaluation Team finds the Council of Europe’s monitoring mechanisms to be relevant and generally effective and their added value compared to other mechanisms also generally considered to be high. The Secretariat agrees with this assessment. That said, the Secretariat questions the understanding of the Evaluation Team of the independence and respective mandates of the monitoring mechanisms and the pertinence of some of the recommendations in the report. Where applicable, actions already implemented or envisaged are set out in the Action Plan below.

ACTION PLAN

Management Decision ¹	Entity in Charge ²	Planned Actions ³ (determined by Entity)	Justification for Non-Acceptance ⁴	Target Date for Action	Person Responsible for Action
<p>Recommendation 1: Facilitate follow-up given to Monitoring Mechanisms (MMs) recommendations by the CM and states, and particularly:</p> <p>a. Explore further ways and means of facilitating effective follow-up to MM key recommendations addressed to member states.</p> <p>b. Ensure that MMs have an effective system for following up on recommendations and institutionalise the follow-up as an integral part of the monitoring process.</p> <p>(High⁵)</p>					
<input type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rejected <input type="checkbox"/> Under consideration	a. PO (in consultation with CM Sec and PACE Sec)	MMs are a high political priority for the large majority of member States, which is often reflected in relevant decisions, political declarations, etc. Where applicable, the Secretary General proposes relevant cooperation and assistance projects to accompany member States in implementing recommendations.	Member States are individually and collectively responsible for ensuring proper compliance with their obligations as members of the Organisation. Follow-up to MM recommendations is the prerogative of member States.		
	b. DGI and DGII (MMs secretariats in consultation with MMs members)	Where applicable, the MM Secretariats will bring to the attention of the respective MM members the need to assess the effectiveness of the follow-up given to the recommendations within their current mechanisms and make any proposals for improvements.	MMs are independent.		

1 The Management decision concerns the Recommendation (Accepted, Rejected, Under consideration).

2 Initial suggestion – to be defined/updated by management.

3 For implementing accepted recommendations.

4 For recommendations that are rejected or under consideration.

5 Recommendations have been classified as either “high” or “medium” in terms of the assessment of their importance following the evaluation.

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<p>Recommendation 2: Provide all MMs with the resources needed to deliver quality and relevant products, and particularly:</p> <p>a. Ensure that MMs have the necessary funds to implement their activities efficiently and effectively. Analyse the feasibility of financing certain MM activities by external stakeholders.</p> <p>b. Address the need for all MMs to have sufficient permanent human resources to fulfil their mandate.</p> <p>(High)</p>					
<input type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rejected <input type="checkbox"/> Under consideration	a. PO (in consultation with CM)	The Secretary General proposes appropriate resources within the limits of the overall appropriations fixed by the Committee of Ministers.	Financing MM activities by external stakeholders is not appropriate.		
	b. DGI and DGII (in co-operation with Directorate of Human resources)	The need for adjustments to the human resources of specific MMs will be considered during the mid-term budgetary review (2023) and proposals will be made for the biennium 2024-2025, where relevant.			

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Recommendation 3: Ensure there is a forum for discussing good practices and working methods, and particularly, facilitate the setting-up of a task force composed of DGI-DGII and MMs staff in charge of the dissemination of good practices and development of working methods without prejudice to the independence of the MMs concerned. (High)					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected <input type="checkbox"/> Under consideration	PO	Enhanced coordination and optimal synergies between MMs remain an important factor in continuously improving the Organisation's effectiveness and impact. This has been facilitated by the yearly meetings between presidents and executive secretaries of monitoring and advisory bodies organised since 2013 by the Secretary General.		Implemented	
Recommendation 4: Increase the direct dialogue between MMs and states, and particularly, ensure that a dialogue is maintained before the finalisation of the monitoring reports. (High)					
<input type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Under consideration	DGI and DGII (MMs secretariats in consultation with MMs members)	It should be noted that interaction between MMs and intergovernmental committees has grown constantly. For the independent MMs (where the states are not already involved in a dialogue with the MMs in question prior and/or after to the final adoption of country reports), the modalities for strengthening dialogue, based on good practices across the CoE, will be considered.			DGs of DG I and DG II

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<p>Recommendation 5: Increase the co-operation and co-ordination between MMs, and particularly:</p> <p>a. Revise the format of the annual meeting with the MMs, in order to foster co-operation and exchange between them. In addition to a discussion.</p> <p>b. Encourage mobility of human resources between MMs.</p> <p>c. Reinforce the exchanges of information between MMs. Ensure that there is a mechanism within the MM (be it a working group, a committee, the Bureau, etc.) to review their practices.</p> <p>(High)</p>					
<input type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rejected <input type="checkbox"/> Under consideration	a. PO	At its 131st Session (Hamburg, 21 May 2021) the Committee of Ministers invited the Secretary General to continue her regular dialogue with the chairs of the monitoring bodies with a view to strengthening synergies and co-ordination and to report back in time for the Ministerial Session in May 2022. In her report and proposals to the 132nd Session (Turin, 20 May 2022), the Secretary General noted that the sharing of information and best practices in certain types of monitoring activity has been a constant feature of this coordination.	The format of the annual meetings is appropriate.		
	b. DGI and DGII	Staff mobility will continue to be encouraged as part of the People Strategy adopted by the Committee of Ministers.	This is current policy.		
	c. DGI and DGII (MMs secretariats in consultation with MMs members)	The practice of holding exchanges of views between MM members and representatives of other MMs will be further encouraged. Each MM will develop, as appropriate, its own modalities with the view to reviewing working methods and practices.	It remains for MMs to decide on mechanisms.		

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Recommendation 6: Further strengthen gender mainstreaming and consideration of equity in MMs, and particularly, develop a brief gender and equity policy paper for each MM. (High)					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected <input type="checkbox"/> Under consideration	DGI and DGII (MMs secretariats in consultation with MMs members, Gender Equality Rapporteurs, Gender Equality Division)	<p>Gender equality considerations are already an important aspect of the MMs work. A survey of the existing gender mainstreaming activities is currently being undertaken (summer 2022) in order to establish a baseline and to monitor progress during the 2022-2025 quadrennium. A training session for Gender Equality Rapporteurs in each MM is carried out every year. This can be further strengthened via a good practice guide or by making this a point for one of the annual meetings of the MMs.</p> <p>In terms of equity, which is understood from the report to mean effective equality on other than gender grounds, training sessions on anti-discrimination standards, minority rights and children's rights, could be organised for the MM secretariats.</p>		31/12/2023	DGs of DG I and DG II

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Recommendation 7: Reinforce the links between the monitoring and co-operation dimensions of the strategic triangle, and particularly, facilitate interaction between MM staff drawing up reports and staff dealing with co-operation activities. (High)					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected <input type="checkbox"/> Under consideration	ODGP, DGI and DGII (MMs secretariats consultation with MMs members)	<p>Under consideration ODGP, DGI and DGII (MMs secretariats consultation with MMs members).</p> <p>Significant progress has been made in most sectors. Examples of good practices could be shared across secretariats. Nonetheless, the specificities and independence of MMs must be respected and any interaction will remain informal.</p>		31/12/2023	Director of ODGP
Recommendation 8: Establish secure online data collection tools to make public resources and other non-confidential information available to all MMs and other stakeholders, and in particular, implement a specific study to define business requirements and identify the technical aspects of the most appropriate software and technologies. Based on the results of the study, consider establishing a user-friendly tool that allows the pooling of publicly available resources, such as relevant legislation. (Medium)					
<input type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Under consideration	PO	A working group with representatives from the relevant MMs will be set up in Q2 2023 to consider the business case for this recommendation.		31/12/2023	Director of DIT

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<p>Recommendation 9: Increase the accessibility and the visibility of MMs products, and particularly:</p> <p>a. Ensure that all MMs are clearly identifiable and their websites easily accessible from the main Council of Europe portal. Develop a webpage easily accessible from the main Council of Europe website.</p> <p>b. In the framework of the ongoing reform of the social media policy, consider ways to secure appropriate visibility to MMs results and achievements.</p> <p>c. Appoint one focal point in each MM in charge of relations with the Directorate of Communication.</p> <p>(Medium)</p>					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected <input type="checkbox"/> Under consideration	a. DC (in consultation with DIT)	The web presence of the Organisation will be reformed with the introduction of thematic navigation organised around a simple, informative page. The revised portal content should be optimised for search engines.		31/12/2023	DC
	b. PO	The revised social media policy and rules aim to raise the profile of the Council of Europe and mitigate reputational risks. It will create a transversal, topic-driven social media architecture which will help prevent duplication and increase impact. Nonetheless, the new social media architecture will allow the existing Twitter accounts of monitoring bodies to remain. A new integrated Social Media Division will support the management of social media accounts and provide necessary monitoring of these accounts.		31/12/2023	DSG
	c. DGI and DGII (MMs secretariats in consultation with MMs members)	Where human resources allow it, one staff member of each MM secretariat will be tasked with relations with the Directorate of Communication.		31/12/2023	DGs of DG I and DG II

Abbreviations	
CM	Committee of Ministers
DC	Directorate of Communications
DGI	Directorate General Human Rights and Rule of Law
DGII	Directorate General of Democracy and Human Dignity
DIT	Directorate of Information Technology
DSG	Deputy Secretary General
MM	Monitoring Mechanisms
ODGP	Office of the Directorate General of Programmes
PO	Private Office of the Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General
PACE	Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
SecCM	Secretariat of the Committee of Ministers