

EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REYKJAVÍK DECLARATION

Management response and Action plan



May 2025

DIO-EVA(2025)03

Management response and Action Plan

Name of Evaluation Report:	Evaluation of the implementation of the Reykjavík Declaration		
Date of Evaluation Report:	31 March 2025	Date of Action Plan:	27 May 2025

Overall management response to the evaluation:

The Organisation welcomes the Evaluation of the implementation of the Reykjavík Declaration, which provides a useful general overview of its effects on the Organisation. It particularly appreciates the evaluators' assessments that "the Declaration's adoption was followed by systematic reflection and analysis of work across the Organisation", "the process (...) led to a restructured Programme and Budget aligned with the Declaration, "implementation of the Declaration to date is largely on track and efficient", and that "the Organisation has given a relevant response to the needs of the geopolitical context expressed in the Declaration".

At the same time, the evaluators recognised that "the years leading up to the Summit and the Declaration were characterised by external and internal challenges for the Organisation" (notably the full-scale war of aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine), which "made it necessary to recommit to the Council of Europe's values". The evaluation also acknowledges that the Declaration's core elements contributed to "reaffirming the core values of the Council of Europe (democracy, human rights and the rule of law), strengthening multilateralism and uniting with a view to supporting Ukraine".

In this context, the Evaluation on the implementation of the Reykjavík Declaration concludes that the response given to the Declaration to date is relevant and effective in general. The Programme and Budget is aligned with the Declaration and important steps have been taken in priority areas, in particular to support Ukraine. Continuation of existing work has been validated by the Declaration and ensures consistency over time. Additional efforts have been made to involve civil society and youth representatives. This is a positive signal, which pays tribute to the work carried out so far.

The Secretary General, the Deputy Secretary General and the whole Organisation are fully committed to pursuing the implementation of the Reykjavík Declaration along these lines. The Organisation will notably endeavour to use the findings of this evaluation in order to refine the future response to the Declaration in the years to come. The evaluation will also be used by the Committee of Ministers in their upcoming budgetary discussions for the second biennium (2026-2027).

Some recommendations are already being implemented, while actions to implement the other recommendations are set out below, taking into account the capacities and resources available, which might not always match the high level of ambition. Moreover, the evaluation comes at an early stage following the adoption of the Reykjavík Declaration so it might be too early to measure the full impact of the measures taken to implement it. It should also be noted that the full implementation of the Reykjavík Declaration depends on many complex political and geostrategic considerations, some of which are beyond the control of the Organisation. Moreover, some recommendations, such as in relation to the regular Summits of Heads of State and Government, relate to complex issues that are to be decided in line with the existing challenges depending on the developing geopolitical circumstances and not only current political considerations.

Nevertheless, in this perspective, the evaluation highlights that high expectations remain to be fulfilled with regard to the establishment of a comprehensive compensation mechanism, the protection and promotion of democracy and responses to environmental concerns. It further recommends defining the level of ambition of the Organisation on civil society and youth engagement, decentralisation and external dimension. It also acknowledges that current funding is unlikely to be sufficient to meet the expectations set by the Declaration.

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
Recommendation 1: The Council of Europe should develop an intentional and strategic approach drawing on existing and new avenues and engagement mechanisms to maintain momentum created by the Declaration and continuous commitment of member states to the work of the Organisation, as well as their engagement in new priorities whenever needed. The question of an eventual regularity of Summits has been discussed throughout this evaluation. However, convening a Summit will ultimately always represent a political decision in a specific situation. It seems therefore worth considering what other instruments could be used to re-confirm the shared responsibility of all stakeholders. We recommend assigning this forward-looking task and the related communication to the Secretary General of the Organisation. (High ⁵)					
<input type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partially accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected	PO	<p>The Secretary General (SG) has put in place the process towards the New Democratic Pact for Europe which is further developing, and concretely putting in place, the Reykjavík Principles for Democracy.</p> <p>A concrete roadmap for this process has been devised and presented to the Committee of Ministers (SG/Inf(2025)14). It is intended to serve as a foundation for shaping how the Council of Europe addresses democratic backsliding and revitalises democracy in Europe. Such outcomes will provide guidance in the Programme and Budget 2028-2031.</p> <p>The Secretary General has prioritised strengthening the role of the Council of Europe to fulfil the Reykjavik Declaration. This means reinforcing the geopolitical dimension of the Organisation, the Council of Europe's external dimension, strengthening partnerships with the EU and other international organisations, and with the European Political Community (EPC), in particular to shape democratic security and resilience on the continent.</p>	In so far as the recommendation suggests regular holding of Summits of Heads of State and Government, it should be noted that this question has still not been decided. This is not always a political decision in a specific context. As in the case of other international organisations, the opportunity to have Summits of Heads of states and government on a regular basis must be discussed in the light of actual challenges.	<p>Process towards a New Democratic Pact October 2024-December 2026.</p> <p>Regional/International Organisations – first meeting October 2025 and then periodic meetings.</p> <p>EPC project ongoing.</p> <p>High-level missions ongoing.</p>	All actions are taken under the direction of the SG Deputy Secretary General / Director of the PO / Deputy Director of the PO / Advisers

¹ The management decision is in relation to the Recommendation (Accepted, Partially accepted, Rejected).

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

³ For implementing accepted recommendations.

⁴ For recommendations that are partially accepted or rejected.

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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		This will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - meetings with the Heads of regional/international organisations - to explore synergies with the main international partners to address the current challenges; - active participation in the EPC to ensure the highest level of synergies; - high level missions to strengthen the CoE position and promote its values in Europe and globally. 			
Recommendation 2: The Council of Europe should foster inclusive internal processes and promote transversality across the Council of Europe institutions as well as within its Secretariat. Transparent and inclusive processes should be implemented to foster understanding and ownership of programmatic and budgetary decisions. Transversality is important for inclusive participation, for creating synergies, avoiding duplication of efforts, and mutual learning between the Organisation's various entities. This also supports the unity of an organisation that comprises several institutions. In practical terms, transversality means ensuring communication channels and space and time for exchanges, while carefully managing time and resources. (High)					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Partially accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected	PO with the support of DPB	To foster inclusive internal processes and transversality, the Secretary General has instituted: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Regular periodic meetings of the Senior Management Group (SMG) at which senior managers exchange with the SG/DSG and amongst themselves over political priorities, key challenges and management of the Organisation's active activities and processes. 2) Regular periodic meetings between the SG and the Directors and Heads of Division of the DGs at which the strategic vision on the specific topics is discussed and the main conclusions summarised in a paper. All PO Advisers are invited to participate in these meetings together with the PO Director and the Deputy Director. 3) Regular periodic meetings of all management staff (A4 to A7) where they can exchange in an open debate with the SG over the key challenges and prospects of their work and the strategic development of the Organisation. 4) In the preparation of the revised Programme and 		1)-3) Ongoing. 4) For the 2nd biennium 2026-2027, meetings held on 26 and 28 March and 15 and 21 May 2025. This is a process put in place for future budgetary preparations.	Director of the PO / Deputy Director of the PO / Advisers / Directors General DGI and DGII / Director of the DPB

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
		Budget for the 2nd biennium 2026-2027, the PO, in cooperation with DPB, has organised a thematic meeting with the SG/DSG and management of the entities concerned to discuss the relevant budgetary issues in an open and inclusive manner.			
<p>Recommendation 3: The Council of Europe should establish scenarios representing possible levels of ambition, scope of work and required resources, taking into consideration existing framework documents and efforts, with regard to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • engagement and participation of civil society in the Council of Europe's work; • engagement and participation of youth in the Council of Europe's work; • decentralisation of the Organisation to strengthen its co-operation work on the ground; • engagement of the Council of Europe beyond its member states and with external partners (external dimension). <p>Scenarios should be developed in each of the areas mentioned above. Making progress in these areas may require a shift in the way the Organisation operates. This needs to be carefully analysed, and decisions regarding changes must be supported by evidence. Requirements (i.e. processes, mechanisms, funding, political support) and the consequences of changes must also be assessed. The commitment, support and engagement of member states are essential aspects, and need to be commensurate with ambitions and honoured throughout. (High)</p>					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Partially accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected	PO with the support of DGII, DPC, DPAER, and DPB	<p>1. Ongoing exploratory work and transversal consultations carried out by DGII on future developments with regard to civil society participation, including relations with the CINGO and the possible development of a mechanism for civil society protection. Engagement with civil society forms part of the process towards the New Democratic Pact for Europe.</p> <p>2. Regarding youth, see management response in the context of the DIO Evaluation of the integration of a youth perspective in Council of Europe work (DIO-EVA(2025)01).</p> <p>3. A strategy for Decentralisation and Mobility was presented to the Committee of Ministers in April 2025 (cf. CM(2025)59).</p> <p>4. See the response to Recommendation No. 1. Progress has been made on the engagement of the Council of Europe beyond its member states and with external partners (external dimension), including with</p>		<p>1. See Recommendation No. 1.</p> <p>2. See management response in the context of the DIO Evaluation of the integration of a youth perspective in Council of Europe work (DIO-EVA(2025)01).</p> <p>3. Implementation period 2025-2028.</p> <p>4. While PO/DPAER have already moved toward the implementation of this recommendation, the strengthening of the Council of Europe's external dimension is an ongoing process.</p>	PO / Directors General DGI and DGII / Directors DPC, DPAER, DPB

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
		the European Union, the UN and the OSCE, and by intensifying efforts to broaden the external dimension of the Organisation (such as with the European Political Community), with Observer States, and with the Neighbourhood Partnerships. The staffing of the Council of Europe liaison offices in Geneva and Vienna have been reinforced through the adjusted 2025 budget. With the aim of reinforcing co-operation with the UN and enhancing the visibility of the Council of Europe globally, the creation of a Council of Europe Liaison Office with the United Nations in New York has been approved and steps are being undertaken for its effective establishment.			
<p>Recommendation 4: The Council of Europe should strengthen its management framework (including planning, execution, and continuous monitoring) for initiatives where high expectations have not yet fully materialised, so that decisions about whether/how to proceed with their implementation are informed by evidence gathered throughout the process. This would support effectiveness and efficiency in the implementation of the Declaration and prompt decision making. This could be particularly relevant for the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a comprehensive compensation mechanism following the establishment of the Register of Damage; • democracy through the development of a strategy on democracy; • the environment with the establishment of the Reykjavík Committee. <p>At a more detailed level, steps taken should follow a consolidated approach, enabling processes to be monitored, discrepancies between plans and results to be identified, and decisions to be taken when required to move on. (High)</p>					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Partially accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected	PO, DGI, DGII	<p>1. The question of a comprehensive compensation mechanism is examined by the Intergovernmental Negotiation Committee on an International Treaty to establish a Claims Commission for Ukraine. The Council of Europe remains ready to play a key role in setting up the claims commission if States so decide.</p> <p>2. See above regarding Recommendation No. 1 on the New Democratic Pact for Europe.</p> <p>3. At the 134th Session of the Committee of Ministers (Luxembourg, 13-14 May 2025) the CM endorsed the CoE Strategy on the Environment and agreed to consider the setting up of an</p>		<p>1. The timeframe is dependent on the decisions to be taken by the States concerned.</p> <p>2. See Recommendation No. 1 above.</p> <p>3. CM decision on the establishment of the Reykjavík Committee by end 2025.</p>	PO / Directors General DGI and DGII

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
		intergovernmental multidisciplinary committee on environment in the framework of the discussions on the budget for the next biennium 2026- 2027.			
Recommendation 5: The Council of Europe should leverage the implementation and impact of deliverables following the Declaration to promote its work to various stakeholders, including civil society, using sharpened messaging. This comprises communicating its work at important stages of implementation with messages targeted to a range of audiences, including beyond institutional and government circles. Messaging should also address challenges and reflections and, overall, align expectations of stakeholders with ongoing and future work. (High)					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Partially accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected	DGI, DGII, PACE, Congress, CommHR with the support of DC	In order to promote the Council of Europe activities and maximise their impact, the SG has decided to restructure the Directorate of Communications. In line with this strategic approach, a new Media Department will be created under the direct supervision of the PO.		The creation of the Media Department takes effect on 1 June 2025. Otherwise, this is ongoing activity.	Director of the PO/ Head of the Media Department

Abbreviations	
CommHR	Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights
Congress	Secretariat of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities
DC	Directorate of Communications
DGI	Directorate General Human Rights and Rule of Law
DGII	Directorate General of Democracy and Human Dignity
DPAER	Directorate of Political Affairs and External Relations
DPB	Directorate of Programme and Budget
DPC	Directorate of Programme Co-ordination
PACE	Secretariat of the Parliamentary Assembly
PO	Private Office of the Secretary General and the Deputy Secretary General